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Notes of the Week

MR. MACDONALD'S "Victory" speech we examine in a leading article. Deliberately vague and studiously moderate, planned with an eye to Asquithian support, it was a perfect Liberal speech. Perhaps the country need not take too seriously his flights of millennial fancy. The Labour Party, though it plume itself on the distinction, has no monopoly of idealism, and if it be more idealistic than the other parties, that is because it has had less experience of the obstinate affairs of State. When Mr. MacDonald and his colleagues come to grips with political realities they will discover—if they do not already know—that there is no magic panacea for our discontents, foreign or domestic; and the responsibilities of office will do something, perhaps, to moderate the ardour of extremists. Conservatives, however, should vigilantly remember that every wedge has its thin end.

HOW TO COUNTER SOCIALISM

The only effective method—and it will, we feel sure, be thoroughly effective—of countering Socialist progress is not, as Lords Birkenhead and Rothermere and Sir Frederick Banbury seem to imagine, by returning to the bad old days of Conservative-Liberal coalition, but by patiently preaching and teaching up and down the country a constructive Tory programme of democratic reform. True Tory democracy is Britain's political ideal, and more reforms, it is a truism to repeat, have been placed on the Statute Book by Conservatives than by any other Government. The policy of fusion is a policy of fear, or, more truly, it is a lack of all policy induced by the blindest and most stupid kind of panic.

"FUSION" FOLLY

Labour must be given the opportunity to govern which has constitutionally fallen to its lot. Mr. Asquith, who has often been wrong, was right when he said that that opportunity could hardly be granted under safer circumstances. To deprive Labour of the

chance to take power, and of all the lessons and difficulties which the taking of power involves, by an unnatural union of fundamentally and historically opposed parties, would be at once to provide it with a convenient party cry and to drive into its ranks a large body of the electorate, who would rightly regard a Conservative-Liberal coalition as a cynical betrayal of principles. It is amusing to find the panic Press describing the handful of M.P.s who support its "fusion" policy as "constitutional M.P.s." How are they more constitutional than their less terrified brethren? And in what way is the Socialist party accurately dubbed "unconstitutional"? Whether it will be so or not remains to be seen.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' OPPORTUNITIES

Having commented last week on the probability and desirability of larger scope in the new House for private members, we have been interested by Colonel John Ward's promptitude in claiming more opportunities for such members in debate. At present, while party spokesmen whose intentions have been made known to the Speaker by the Whips have every chance of catching his eye, the member who is independent of his party on some question is not likely to get many openings to place his opinions before the House. There is nothing in the idea of allocation of time between members, with a maximum not to be exceeded by any but Ministers and Opposition leaders, and a minimum to which the obscurest private member shall be entitled. The only hope is in the discretion of the Speaker.

A FRENCH OPINION

During the week nothing of outstanding importance has occurred in the Franco-German controversy, Paris not having yet replied to the last German Note. Early in the week a curious uneasiness was noticeable in the Paris Press about British intentions concerning Turkey and the Near East, the *Temps* going so far as to suggest that England was pursuing a policy of conquest. Of course, nothing could be farther from the truth. The French papers next turned to comment on Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Albert Hall speech, but they

are disposed to consider it an expression of merely idealistic views. They understand very thoroughly that the "broad foot and the big heel" policy voiced by Mr. MacDonald is scarcely likely to be very effective against the great French army and the alliances of France on the Continent. We take it, however, that the broad foot and the big heel are an equivalent for our old friend the big stick, and that Mr. MacDonald has no notion of reducing our armaments still further.

M. POINCARÉ'S POSITION

As the result of the elections for the French Senate is to make very little change in its composition, this indicates a success for M. Poincaré and his foreign policy. The question whether these elections afford any guidance regarding the result of the General Election for the Chamber, which takes place in the spring, is one not easy to answer, for while the great majority of the French people have supported M. Poincaré's foreign policy, they have not been nearly so unanimous in approving his domestic policy. Four months have to pass, and a good deal may happen in the interval both for and against him. Will or will not the Ruhr become sufficiently productive to satisfy the French peasant, who is the Grand Elector of France? This issue is of prime importance. Then there is the Millerand-Poincaré struggle now going on. Still, at present M. Poincaré's position has been strengthened, and on the whole the omens are favourable for him.

THE FALL OF THE FRANC

It was, perhaps, to be expected that M. de Lasteyre, the French Finance Minister, should assert that the present depreciation of the franc was not justified by any plausible reason from without or within, but the facts are against him. No doubt if France had received from Germany large sums on account of reparations, her financial position would be better than it is, but she has not obtained such sums, nor, as things are, is she likely to do so for a considerable time to come. But the real reason for the fall of the franc is the French budgetary system, which provides by taxation for part only of the national expenditure and gets the rest by internal loans. This process of non-balancing Budgets has continued so long that the debt of France has increased enormously, with the result that her currency has lost its former value; nor will there be a radical improvement in the franc until this process is stopped and the French people are adequately taxed.

RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW

The Soviet Government's recognition had, as was to be expected, a prominent place in Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's speech at the Albert Hall on Tuesday. Apart from the merits or demerits of the British recognition of Moscow, it has to be said that throughout Europe, not excepting France, there is a general movement towards recognition, but it has also to be said that this movement contemplates bargaining in every case—recognition on terms. We commend this fact to Mr. MacDonald's attention, and we trust that he has no idea of throwing away those advantages which were secured by Lord Curzon's firm action two or three months ago. Nor is it beside the point to note that the U.S. Government not only continues to frown upon the Soviet Government, but has made public its sufficient reason for doing so—namely, the persistence of Bolshevik intrigues and plots in America for the overthrow of the Government.

THE BETTING REPORT

The report of the Cautley Committee ought to have been withheld. It cannot now serve the practical purpose of furnishing a basis for taxation: all chance of a betting tax disappears with the imminent fall of the

Government. What it can and will do is to provide an immense amount of ammunition for those who are against all betting, and thus facilitate restrictive legislation, which would be evaded at every turn, and result in still more widespread contempt for the law. We are altogether opposed to raking up "social evils" except with a view to common-sense control of them, and must regard much of the report, sober as it is, and useful as it would have been to the Government initiating the inquiry, as a present of munitions to the fanatics who deem betting a sin, and reckon money transferred between individuals as lost to the nation.

THE EMBASSY AT WASHINGTON

As announced in the SATURDAY REVIEW some months ago (and immediately contradicted), Sir Auckland Geddes is leaving the Embassy at Washington, and Sir Esme Howard has been appointed in his place. We rejoice in a decision that has restored this important diplomatic post to one who is professionally trained for it. The extravagant and showy experiments associated with the Washington Embassy since the tragic withdrawal of Sir Cecil Spring Rice—to whom Anglo-American relations probably owe even now more than to any other human being—ought to be proof enough that whatever mistakes professional diplomats may sometimes make, they are generally on the negative side, and are far less disastrous and expensive than those committed by distinguished, although necessarily inexperienced, public men. In making this assertion we incline to regard Sir Auckland Geddes as affording an exception to the general rule. He has done real and useful work; but at the cost of discouragement and damage to the regular diplomatic service.

BAD MANNERS ON THE HIGH SEAS

It is not surprising that the recent seizures of British vessels outside the three-mile limit by the U.S. authorities is creating an embarrassing situation both here and at Washington. For these seizures have taken place while a treaty, to which America and Britain are quite friendly parties, is being negotiated for the adjustment of all matters connected with the arrest of "rum-runners" at a distance of more than three miles from the coast. In the circumstances the treaty cannot but be prejudiced. Further, it appears that the American State Department, which corresponds to our Foreign Office, has so far taken no notice of the protests lodged by our Embassy. It is said that the delay is occasioned by the fact that the protests have to be referred to the U.S. Department of Justice for consideration, but seeing that at least one of these protests was made two months ago, this is a very unsatisfactory explanation.

AGAIN EMPIRE WIRELESS

It is most regrettable that there has been no settlement of the Empire Wireless question with the Marconi or other outside organization. The position at present is that the Government is proceeding with the erection of one Government station, but in an interview Mr. Bruce, the Australian Prime Minister, states that this station alone will be utterly inadequate to meet the demands of the service which the Dominions desire. This is admitted by the Post Office authorities, who, however, still stand in the way of an arrangement with the Marconi Company. Mr. Bruce went on to say that Australia would welcome the erection of any stations in addition to the Government station, and that more stations are imperatively required. He adds what we have often urged—that unless prompt, definite action be taken, wireless communication throughout the Empire will be seriously handicapped. We are tired of saying that it is high time that this matter, which is not really of a controversial kind, was dealt with finally.

THE RURAL PARTY

When we have had an opportunity of investigating carefully the aims and objects of the newly-constituted Rural Party, we shall hope to put its case before our readers. We will only say now that the general policy of the Party as outlined in the Press holds much promise; the interests of agriculture in this country have been so long and studiously ignored by successive Governments that we can only welcome the formation of any Party which has for its purpose the concentration of attention upon this vital industry. Agriculture is our fourth line of defence.

THE TASK OF M. VENIZELOS

M. Venizelos had a very rough voyage to Greece, and whether his illness after his arrival at Athens was diplomatic, as is hinted, or not, it is easy to understand that he desired some days of quiet, away from all noisy demonstrations, in which to take counsel with the leaders on the spot. For his task is one of immense difficulty, if not of danger. The line he is taking seems to us to be the right one. He declares he has no political purposes to serve—that he seeks nothing for himself, but wishes to stand outside Greek politics altogether, his sole object being that of the reconciliation of the contending parties and the re-establishment of Greece on a secure foundation. Having succeeded in accomplishing this, he states that he will again withdraw from the country. But Venizelos is much the greatest Greek of the time. There is no other who can be compared with him, and this being the case, it is possible enough that he may be unable to retire from Greece for a very long time.

LABOUR AND INDIA

There is no part of the Empire in which more anxiety is felt at the prospect of a Labour Government than in India. It is not Mr. Ramsay MacDonald who inspires alarm. He at least knows something of the country, and though too optimistic about the ability of India to dispense with British guidance, is not incapable of perceiving some of the dangers of headlong advance towards Swaraj. It is his colleagues who are feared, and in particular Colonel Wedgwood, who has been spoken of as a possible Secretary of State for India. The situation in that country, though thoroughly unsatisfactory, can be prevented from deterioration, but it would need very little folly at Whitehall to bring about disaster with which our administrators in India no longer have the means of coping. Is it too much to ask that the admirers of Russia shall be prevented by their better-informed leader from creating a Russia within the Empire?

THE LITTLE ENTENTE

Great importance attaches to the conference this week at Belgrade of the States of the Little Entente. The meeting is all the more significant because it is to be followed next week by a Russo-Rumanian Conference at Salzburg, which rather suggests that the chief subject of discussion at Belgrade will be relations with Russia. The interest of Rumania in these is far more direct than that of Czecho-Slovakia and Yugo-Slavia, and it is Rumania's desire to come to terms with the Soviet Government, especially with regard to Bessarabia, that leads her to favour the inclusion of Poland in the Little Entente. But at the moment Poland is rather suspicious; not at all friendly with Czecho-Slovakia, she sees in the reported terms of the draft Franco-Czech Treaty a blow to her pride and a lowering of the confidence she reposed in France. Regarding that treaty itself, Dr. Benes, the Czech Foreign Minister, faced by a uniformly "bad Press" in England, has made certain explanations, but the

doubts expressed in this country will not be set at rest until the treaty is published—if then.

THE ODD FELLOWS' DINNER

We have no objection to ex-prisoner Members of Parliament and their friends dining together for old acquaintance' sake, in the manner of old schoolfellows. There is a *camaraderie*, we suppose, among Old Maidstonians and Old Parkhurst Boys as among Old Etonians or Harrovians. But we do object, and think it indecent, that these Members should seek to make political capital out of their misfortunes. Many of these martyrs suffered imprisonment for their religious scruples, in the hour of their country's extremity, and that—though it may be a cause of some personal satisfaction—is not in our opinion a sufficient reason for "stunt" publicity now. We can respect the cry of conscience, but less easily the cry of self-advertisement. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in congratulating them, said: "It is the old story—from prison to honour." But surely there are other roads.

THE DEGRADATION OF LANGUAGE

Sir Henry Hadow has done well to force attention to the popularity among us of words ugly in themselves or hideous in their misuse. The processes which are ruining the language, however, are assisted not only by ignorance, but the spirit of the age. Sir Henry may count on a sympathetic hearing from those who are already with him. The people will hear him only under some such protest as Jack Cade made against claims to literacy. The one chance is to persuade practical men and women that lucidity, precision, expressiveness have a business value, and that the very transactions of the market-place would be speedier and less productive of trouble if conducted in good English instead of jargon. We must use not scholastic, but utilitarian arguments.

A CURE FOR CANCER

If we may credit reports from Vienna, Dr. Freund and Dr. Kaminer have discovered a possible cure for cancer. Their researches have, at any rate, brought them to the point of belief in two of their working assumptions: that a substance present in the blood of a healthy person is absent from that of a cancerous person, and that, instead of the malignant cell depriving its healthy organism of its best juices, the organism, owing to its digestive system going wrong, offers to the cancerous spot an inadequate supply of normal building matter. In the correction of this defect in nourishment, it is thought, is the cure for cancer. Lay criticism would be sheer impudence. We can only hope that, after years of almost entirely foiled inquiry, a cure is in sight. Great Britain has taken no small part in efforts to discover the sinister secret of cancer, and readers need not be reminded of the special campaign opened last year, but medicine knows no frontiers, and British medical men will rejoice if the Freund-Kaminer claims prove to be well-founded.

CAVIARE

Whatever it may be to the general, to the particular caviare is associated with two things only, the covering of those small, rather thick Russian pancakes known as blinis, or of plain toast. The caviare sandwich, which seems to be gaining rather than losing in popularity, is a waste of beautiful material, for the taste of caviare is hopelessly blurred by the top slice of bread, however dainty and thin that slice may be. Again, caviare is for the beginning of a meal. He who would eat sandwiches had better stick to homelier substances, and if meat pleases him not, take to that excellent old preparation, "gentleman's relish." And caviare needs no addition beyond a squeeze of lemon and a little freshly-ground pepper.

THE LIBLABS

THE Labour leader made a fine Liberal speech at the Albert Hall on Tuesday evening. The hall was crowded, not merely by Socialists of the pure faith and by members of the Parliamentary party who are distinguished by the syllable "Lab." in brackets after their name; but by many of their colleagues-to-be who are as yet identified by the syllable "Lib." Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's task was a formidable one. He had first of all to express something of his own inner conviction at this, a very great, moment in his life. In addition, he had to woo the Libs. without disappointing the Labs. He had also in some way to satisfy the Labs. without frightening the Libs., and he had to declare in so many words what it really was which was going to begin the millennium promised by Labour in office. In this difficult task he acquitted himself adroitly and not without dignity. Of course we heard about dawns and horizons, and other stock scenery of the political promise-monger; but on the whole the note of the speech was cleverly tuned to a key of practicality and moderation. The result was the outline of a policy which can best be described by the word Liblab, since it combined an advanced Liberal policy with the most moderate and dove-like of Labour policies. But, we imagine, will hardly melt in the Liblab mouth. To judge from Mr. MacDonald's speech, the party that is to succeed the Conservatives in power is a company of earnest, thinking, noble-minded men, who are by some divine dispensation equipped with the ability to do a number of things that have baffled experienced statesmen for generations. That is not quite the light in which we view the Socialist Party in the House of Commons; but still, let us turn our eyes away from horizons and take a plain survey of the actual field of proposed reform.

The first thing Mr. MacDonald is going to have is peace in Europe. Admirable. He does not say how he is going to get it, otherwise than by a general sympathy with the aims of every human man and woman in every European country. We need not say that the blessed word "Conference" appears early in the programme. But Mr. MacDonald must be perfectly well aware that doing a thing and having a conference about it are quite different things; that there is nothing which is likely to produce so much talk and so little action as a Peace Conference; that Mr. Lloyd George, who might almost be called the Conference King, failed in every single attempt he made to solve problems by travel and talk. The present jealous and embittered state of Europe is at least partly due to one conference, and we are putting it mildly when we say that we almost doubt whether another will do anything to mend it.

The Liblabs are also to "tackle unemployment." It is a great verb that, to tackle. It sounds so vigorous, so easy, so quick, so efficient. But Mr. Lloyd George tackled the problem of unemployment; Mr. Bonar Law tackled it; Mr. Baldwin tackled it; all honestly and to the best of their ability, as we are quite sure Mr. MacDonald will tackle it. But the much-tackled problem is still with us, as in some measure it will certainly be when Mr. MacDonald has finished with it, unless the slow recovery of our economic and industrial life can be hastened. To threaten, and therefore frighten, capital does not seem to us a happy or hopeful way of hastening this recovery. We do not like imputing dishonesty to those with whom we differ; but people who believe in revolution and Communism, and who disbelieve in capitalism, would surely be franker if they said: "This problem cannot be tackled until the false and wicked system of capitalism is swept away." That is, we imagine, the real view of the Socialist Party; but the Liblab policy shelters itself behind the plea of "inheritance." Such difficult and expert work as framing a practical Budget being at present beyond the powers of men who have no experience whatever of the working of the State machinery, they propose to take over the heritage of the Government's financial proposals—made

at the most difficult moment imaginable—and to throw on them the blame for any subsequent failure, while making the inheritance the excuse for avoiding their own risky and untried experiments. Our absurd attitude of aloofness from the noble Russian Government is to be abandoned. Mr. MacDonald gives as his reason that he desires to set trade going. But does he really think that to set trade going with Russia it is necessary to have a representative of Lenin and Trotzky at the Court of St. James? We entirely agree with him, as our readers know, in desiring every encouragement for the promotion of trade with Russia, and every other country; but that has nothing whatever to do with the establishment of political relations with a Government which carries on an active propaganda against the British Empire, and asks for the overthrow of everything on which that Empire is founded.

Then there is Housing. We are all agreed as to the urgent need for more and better houses for our workers. Strangely enough, whenever the Government has made a serious effort to tackle this problem it has found the worker standing in the way, saying that only a certain number of bricks a day must be laid, that the number of those desiring to learn the trade of building must be limited, and that the cost of building shall be such as to make houses economically beyond the means of those for whom they are intended. If Mr. MacDonald can indeed solve the housing problem, he will deserve well of his country. To the simple if awkward question "how?" he answers: "I want a crusade that will give us houses all the time until we have enough houses to put the people in. Whatever guarantees for the maximum production of houses are required, we will give them." Crusades are fine things; but the only crusade which would build houses would be a crusade of labourers, armed with trowels, hods, bricks and mortar, sworn to work as hard as they could until the building was accomplished. A crusade of honest labour, in other words. We do not remember any such crusade having been proposed by the Labour Party.

Again, giving guarantees is one thing, fulfilling them is quite another. There is nothing noble about giving a guarantee unless you have the means to stand by it, and as in the case of pensions, larger pensions, earlier pensions, pensions for more people, the aspiration and the intention are admirable; we ourselves would like everyone to have a pension from the hour of birth to the hour of death. But no amount of tackling or guaranteeing would make it possible. To the simple question as to where the money is to come from for all these good schemes, the Liblabs give no answer. The Libs. will not, and the Labs. must not, say "Capital Levy"; the Labs. will not, and the Libs. dare not, say "lower wages or harder work." Profound mystery, therefore, enshrouds the Liblab intentions concerning this little matter. And so on. And therefore when we come to analyse it carefully, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's speech amounts to very little indeed, beyond a fine and earnest-sounding resolution to make everything better and happier for everyone. The fact that it will be the Labour Party rather than the Conservative or Liberal Party that will, certainly for a time, be entrusted with the carrying out of these common aspirations promises to make the coming Parliamentary session an extremely interesting one. People are so accustomed to the language of exaggeration that this simple statement sounds almost wickedly insufficient. But we entirely refuse to take a tragic view of the present moment, or to believe that the destinies of the world really depend on what happens at Westminster during the next few months, or that the British Empire is on the edge of an abyss into which it is about to fall. These are the cries of the panic-mongers; and they have had two undesirable results. One is that certain timid people are selling out home investments and putting money into foreign countries—a stupid as well as a cowardly policy. For that the responsibility rests on the panic Press, and not on Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. The other result is to enlist a certain amount of sympathy with, and support for,

the Labour Party on the part of certain Englishmen who persistently look upon everything from the point of view of cricket, and who want to see fair play. We also desire to see fair play; but we do not regard the conflict of our own ideas and those of the Socialist Party as a cricket match. It is far graver than that; and in matters that affect us all, people should be guided by knowledge and conviction, and not by sympathy or caprice. We do not entirely believe in the Liblabs; and we wait to see which syllable of the compound becomes dominant in their councils.

THE WOMAN'S OUTLOOK

IT is a curious fact that ever since Rousseau sentimentalized politics and the style of Sterne popularized sentimentality in England, the woman's outlook has come steadily, if gradually, to the fore. In many respects, indeed, England is being rapidly feminized. If anyone had told Pitt or even Charles James Fox that women would ever sit in the House of Commons, they would laughingly have buttoned up their pockets and quoted Aristophanes's 'Women in Parliament,' where Praxagora, the prototype of Miss Pankhurst, describes the golden age of universal honesty through a communism both of lands and chattels under her presiding auspices:

"... Την γῆν πρῶτιστα κοίησεν
Κοιήσεν πάντων τὰς γῆρας καὶ τὰς ἀλλ'
ὅσας ἐστὶν ἐκάστη."

Our Labour Party is being sentimentalized to the core, despite the cogent objection of the British working man to subject himself to his wife or to renounce his ancient motto that an Englishman's house (or hovel) is his castle. And this is the stranger because the Fabians who now hold the reins are by no means feminists, and Mr. Bernard Shaw never loses an occasion to satirize sentimentality and to allege that it is man who has sentimentalized woman. That is all very well in housewifery, where the feminine talent for administration comes into practical play, but in public affairs experience shows that women on the whole are out-and-out sentimentalists. In the shops, in the household, as mother, in most things that concern her own, the average woman is sensible enough. But directly her feelings are enlisted for others she becomes recklessly sentimental. The inequalities of human kind hurry her into sweeping generalities, and even where they are practically redressable she seldom discriminates between the cures that aggravate evils by fresh injustices and those that are organically sound. Her intuitions, and sometimes her passions, overbear her reason. All revolutions have been recruited by women. The violence of the Marseillaises was conspicuous in the French upheavals that opened the floodgates of possibility to the world, and it is notable in that Carmagnole that a frail Englishwoman, Helen Maria Williams, was actually paraded in a Parisian chariot as the goddess of Reason. Moreover, the protests of woman's own inherent weaknesses then first expressed themselves in rebellious self-assertions of her strength. She began secretly to despise the masters who had restricted her to domestic duties, and Mary Wollstonecraft was the hysterical pioneer of Woman's Rights. Since then there have been many other contributing causes to these manifestations, and in later days not least the Scandinavian impetus of Ibsen and Bjornsen, which have led Eve to repeat the Serpent's "Hath God said?" Mutiny combined with sentimentality has grown to be a great force in a world that not only craves everything, but demands it at once. And an almost Amazonian feminism pervades modern art and fiction.

We have said that the woman's outlook has come to leaven England's Governments. It did so even in Wilberforce's noble emancipation of slaves, that only erred in the method of its achievement, which, while it swept away a crying iniquity, also perpetrated great inequities. *Quand même* is woman's first and last word. It did so in Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy. It

did so in the "shrieking sisterhood's" denunciation of the Contagious Diseases Act. It has done so in all our mishandling of Ireland which has drenched her with blood and outrage in the cause of sentimental benevolence. And, quite apart from insurgent commitments, it is more than likely to repeat that licence on the impending advent of the Labour Party to power. It will be a woman's Government, cruel in its cries for universal redress. "To do a great right do a little wrong" is a fine inspiration, but "to do a great wrong do a little right" is not the masculine method. Women now not only vote in myriads, but sit in the House of Commons, unbalanced even when they claim to be experts. That so few of them as yet sit there does not look as if their sisters wholly trusted feminine judgment and prudence or had completely abjured their traditional allegiance to virilities and the sort of continuous freedom that it ensures. Stability does not appeal to women who are prone to a delight in perpetual change. The indiscriminate fashions of experiment will always appeal to the mutable sex not only of women but of womanlike men. Nor is it too much to say that if the antics of a Labour Government should prevail, the next Election will return a large reinforcement of women congenially ablaze for every kind of conflagration that usurps the name of liberty, equality, and sorority. For the Trade Union organization is a great commander of votes, and will take care that the "unparalleled reductions" and attractions of the next "Great Red Sale" of England shall appeal to the feminine bargain-hunters who will crowd the polling-booth counters. But, should this happen, it will certainly be Great Britain that will be reduced by such "reductions." Man values, woman sells. The same woman that instinctively discerns "quality" by a touch in the goods that she fingers will confuse quality with quantity and choiceness with cheapness whenever ignorance submits large issues. Sentiment will outweigh logic. Her kindnesses will be callous in the extreme, her caprice will play untold pranks, and her parochial narrowness and retail attitude will find their compensations in an unlimited abundance of feeling for feeling's sake.

This will culminate in the moral of Phil May's old picture in *Punch*. A weebegone little girl waits on Saturday night at the butcher's. He kindly asks her what she wants, and she replies: "It's not what I wants. I wants a bruffam and a dimond tiara. But it's what mother wants. And she wants a bit of the scrag of the neck on the nod till Toosday." Take, as just an indicative straw, the complot for Prohibition. Drunkenness is a great evil, but liberty is a greater good. And there is a midway path to reconcile moderate drinking and its attendant sociabilities with freedom. But the woman whose black eye resents her husband's alcohol will scarcely perceive this, even though she herself takes a dram in season. She will gladly listen to the pedagogue-interlopers whom she repels when they intrude on her own privacy, and still more to the sentimentalists who titillate the feelings of others and trade on artificial tears. Sentimentalism is the great advocate in the *cause célèbre* of Sensibility *versus* Sense. It knows how to hallow subversions and to pervert fallacies and falsities into facts. Since women have been "emancipated," and scorn to be the "toys" of man, there has been an exodus from the home and a restless eagerness for the *vie libre*. The rapid spread of international philanthropy, the multiplied sources of mechanical enjoyment, the open career for women, the "comradeship" with man, the thirst for mechanical excitements, the repugnance to hardships—all these factors, good or bad, have quickened the woman's outlook and are colouring public policies. Sentimentality dresses them up in saintly attire and idealizes them as the celestial fashions of the coming spring.

The whole revolt against Nature that would level the sexes and cancel chivalry is really a denial of that division of labour which underlies all civilizations. Each sex has its sphere: those barriers are of adamant,

and true progress is the offspring of this divided union. But the sentimentalists will abhor facts and film them over with a filibustering feminism. Even one of the earliest revolutionaries in all his tirades against gentry remembered:

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?

The modern Eve asserts that *she* is, but even in spinsterhood she disdains to spin. In the servants' hall she insists on being called "miss," for "miss" is the sentimentalization of the genteel. Sing her a sentimental ballad, show her the romantic melodramas of the faithful lover or the deceiving villain, and her sentimental instinct is evident. In public affairs even the veriest propagandist of social service and "children's welfare" is equally sentimental, though often under the masks of science or the disguises of inefficacy. What women lack is any matured sense of large-sighted justice. And that is just what our Labour Party continue to desire.

He argues high, he argues low,
He also argues round about him.

A Pilgrim's Progress

London, January 10

I HAVE always been interested in the literary problem presented by translation—the reproducing in the mind of people of one nationality and language the thoughts and ideas uttered by a writer of another nationality in another language. Most linguists will tell you that a really good translation is impossible, but I don't agree with them. The fact is that to reproduce a piece of real literature in another language requires that the person who translates it should have almost all the qualities of the original author, and some additional ones as well. If you translate, for example, from the Italian you must know the Italian mind, the kind of value that certain Italian words and phrases have for the Italian mind, and in addition know how to produce the corresponding ideas in the English mind—possibly by quite different methods. As people possessed of these faculties are much more occupied in producing their own works than in reproducing the works of others, good translation is a very rare thing. But the fact that people who know how to read works in the original almost invariably pooh-poo translations should not discourage others from making them. The translation of books is one of the greatest sources of civilization, and helps to produce a common pool of human thought in the world.

* * *

These reflections are induced by a new book that has come into my hands, which will certainly rouse a mixture of contempt and indignation in the minds of those who think that no French book can be adequately translated into English. This is the first volume of a new library edition in English of the works of Guy de Maupassant. Here, if you like, is a challenge to the French enthusiast. It is a challenge on two grounds. First, the French enthusiast will tell you that Guy de Maupassant is a second-rate writer, and, secondly, that in any case the genius of the French language is such that it cannot be reproduced in English. Well, on both points I wish to join issues with the amateurs of French literature. I think that de Maupassant is a writer who has never been sufficiently appreciated by English critics. From the days when to say that a book was improper and French was enough to dispose of a masterpiece, until the day of a generation whose literary memory is only about 10 years old, and regards de Maupassant as old-fashioned, he has never been rated at his true value. To me he is the supreme master of the short story, and the supreme interpreter of French suburban life, not as idealists and enthusiasts may imagine it to be, but as it was and is. His novel 'Bel-Ami,' which forms the first volume of the series which Mr. Werner Laurie is courageous enough to

launch, is not one of his greatest works, but it certainly is one of his most characteristic. I have read all de Maupassant in French, and may claim to know his work well, and therefore I came to this translation by Marjorie Werner with a critical and apprehensive eye.

* * *

I had not read a dozen pages before I had tripped up on two or three mistranslations of the almost inevitable kind—the literal translation of a word that technically means the same in the two languages, but in effect has quite a different association of ideas. But I went on reading rapidly, and I realized that such an occasional fault did not mar the value of the translation as a whole; and that this was a quite sufficiently genuine version as to waft the spirit of de Maupassant's writing across the Channel, and across forty years of time, and to justify the formal and otherwise rather pretentious experiment that the publisher is making. In short, if the rest of de Maupassant's works, especially some of the more perfect of the short stories, are done only as well as this is done, the experiment will have entirely justified itself, and Mr. Laurie will deserve well of the present generation of English readers. This is no case of what George Moore used to call "Vizetelly English"; the English is quite good, although it is not as good as de Maupassant's French. Above all, there is a complete frankness in translation of passages such as would some years ago have been regarded as untranslatable or improper. It is a test of the merit of the translation that they fall into their place without any shock, that they do not look queer in English, and that we have no sense of coquetting with the improper in reading about the somewhat vulgar progress of this particular rake. Of course, personally I would rather read about a *galopin* than an urchin; and about a *mioche* than a baby; but you cannot have everything; something must be lost in translation. My point is that the essential need not be lost, and in this case is not lost.

FILSON YOUNG

"SATURDAY" DINNERS

No. XIV.—AT THE EMBASSY CLUB

NOT easily will any epicure be persuaded that good food and wine are obtainable at establishments in which the kitchen and cellar are subsidiary to the dancing-floor and the orchestra. We are bound to say, however, that a dinner we had the other evening at the Embassy Club was in all respects excellent. We had chosen to dine early, rather to the distress of M. Luigi, who contended that the finest feast must fall flat when the room is almost empty. But if the mind is its own place, so is that part of the human system which relishes choice fare, and for ourselves we can only say that we would rather the serious business of dinner were over before the room gets crowded and the orchestra gets busy. Coffee and old brandy, not dinner dishes, are the proper entertainment of the spectator of dining-room dances.

Here is the menu M. Luigi had designed for us, at his own discretion, but with a hint that it should be in general accord with these "Saturday" dinners:

Huitres Natives
Poule au Pot
Sole Embassy
Faisan
Haricots Verts
Pommes Lorette
Asperges
Pêches

And as to wine, it had been agreed that we should have Château Yquem, 1904, a beautiful wine, with all the characteristic delicacy and lusciousness. That it was thoroughly iced, the decanter being stationed in an ice-pail before our arrival, seemed a concession to popular demand rather than the wisest proceeding. In our view, the passion for icing white wines is no better than that for heating red wines. Certainly in sultry weather most white wines are better for some cooling, such as

may be effected by wrapping a damp napkin round the bottle and leaving it for a while in draught; but though some growers and shippers and wine merchants now encourage icing by recommendations on the labels and notes in their lists, this procedure tends to numb the wine. But it would be churlish to expatiate on this with reference to the lovely wine, blonde and gracious and insinuating, that was served to us, a little wintered, it is true, but the more happy to escape into our glasses.

The oysters came to us prettily settled into beds of crushed ice, though whether the better for that might be debated. The Poule au Pot, with its accompaniments of crusts and grated cheese, was as good as that admirable soup can be, and struck a somewhat homely note one appreciated. The poached sole was of its vast class, every member of which is well-known to diners, though names may not be. Of the pheasant no criticism was possible except that salad might not have been amiss, and the asparagus was of excellent quality.

By this stage the room was comfortably full. One party near us had clearly come to dance rather than dine, and its hostess gave one of those vaguely comprehensive orders that grey the heads of waiters. But a little way off to our left was an elderly man who took food and wine seriously, and composed his short menu three times before he was satisfied. Across the room another man with a stage face to which we could not at the time put a name, seemed to have come to the Embassy chiefly to study the daintily bound wine list, which is indeed a remarkable production, though, perhaps, not very cheerful reading for the new poor, since orchestras have to be paid for out of cellar and kitchen.

Tables were thrust back; the orchestra, which is of its kind very exceptionally good, began to lure dancers on to the floor; and what for most visitors is the real business of the evening began. But we were not alone in preferring to linger over the table. The dancers were such people as a dance club should contain. There was no professionalism about them; there were no announced or voluntary exhibitions of freak dancing; there were no "stunts"; there was no cabaret performance. The curious in these matters would have found little to marvel at and nothing to condemn. But it was not to criticize dancing that we had gone to the Embassy, and our thoughts were those of people who have dined well and find a pleasure in speculation as to the reasons why a menu has harmonized and the wine gone so well with it. Who could wish such thoughts to be disturbed by a cabaret performance?

ON ARRIVING IN ENGLAND

THIS is the last "Colonial" aspect of them all, the ultimate view dissolving all others, more thrillingly than the lanterns of the old magic books of childhood into memory, the point where the eyes are washed, the body and brain flooded with the throbbing sensations of Home. Home it is to all of us, and it is just the size of that initial "H" that gives this first night in England its peculiarly romantic significance. Even if you are a born Colonial, a stranger as I was, sporting the capital rather shamefully, perhaps, more for the sake of a feeling of superiority and the "certain something" possessed by those immaculate English tourists than of national sentiment, you cannot help admitting the bigness and the rightness of its stature. You cannot escape contact with the passionate undercurrent. That old earth-mellowed man at the taffrail there, for instance, spellbound by the sight of some common grey birds flying north to Surrey gardens; that obviously "travelled" Australian lady pacing the soggy decks until midnight marriages, comfortably enough, expectation and sea-sick fears by the first grand sweep of the Lizard light; that aggressively first-class American youth who liked only those saloons that made you feel "the damned sea was quite out of place," wondering whether they would make London in time for the shows that night. . . . Yes, England sweeps the ship.

Fiji, Honolulu, Canada only feather it; the expectation which precedes arrival there is exciting, but it lacks the authentic English thrill. Yet even though one does not go "home" to those places, there is nothing quite like the going there. Not the landfall itself, mind, but the moments just before. Steam has scotched the glamour of the landfall. "Will we have time to do the aquarium?" "At sundown those perfectly ravishing hibiscus flowers close—to say nothing of the Waikiki Hotel. And I ask you, what is Honolulu without . . ." That is the level to which Mr. Conrad's pearly island visions have been reduced by the exigencies of modern ocean travel. But those moments before . . . A sense of impending adventure settles on the swaying ship; those strange, insistent stars become negligible, the wind nips. Over the white back of Canada you feel, you realize, you *know* it has come; you know that soon from somewhere behind that ever-receding gloom ahead, out of that vast, haunting pool of silence will loom, perhaps even before the last red cigarette point drops into it to-night, sand, dark forests, redskins if you are lucky, those far still peaks and all the beckoning paraphernalia of the illustrated guides. The clean, male wind sings in the rigging, billows dinner frocks, fans over the face, the eyes, the hair, winnowing regrets from expectation in the mind. The loved blue days glistening and swift as the curved flight of flying fish, the white unheard crash of waves on a tropic reef, the lyrical swing of the sleeping boat, slip into memory with the ease of the lead into the blue vortex of the wake. To-morrow there will be just the chill, lone pine.

The same feeling, differing only in intensity and in colour, precedes the arrival at any of these ports, but when the low, green bank of England slips up out of the sea, expectation broadens. You realize then that it was the going on, the sither of the sea, the snow-deadened roll of train wheels, that kept excitement keyed in tune with expectation. The Needles prick the bubble of excitement, bursting it, the ship itself slows down, the cinema becomes a stereoscope, here are houses, streets, villages you will know, green fields—how green they are!—you will walk across, treading wet daisies, resting under elms and oaks, men and women of your own sort surging up to meet you out of the greyness. How incredibly English it all seems! How ancient, mellowed and friendly! That greenness again . . . the curved tenderness of her fields . . . and wallflowers growing wild in the Roman ruins. . . . But we have known only harsh wooden houses, roofs of iron, gaunt sweeps of fire-swept hillside, wild things, newness.

Now, on a ripple of recollection, all those most English things one has since seen and loved seemed to beat on exultant wings into the mind on that first night in England. The ship's company had dispersed—gone abroad, perhaps, or north, possibly to join relations in calm Kent villages, or even to "see" London through the windows of dim Bloomsbury rooms—and one was alone. Yet somehow one knew that wherever they were—the old New Zealand farmer who insisted that the sea was not what it was fifty years ago, and sang "Plymouth Hoe" all the way through the tropics, the bad music-hall artist whom, everyone agreed, was simply the life and soul of the ship, the young American with his "patent-leather" hair—were seeing and smelling and feeling these things just the same. They, too, must have shared that first twilight vision of lilac-sweet lawns and slow, pale rivers, of the greyhound Downs, of still sunset gardens full of the notes of strange wild birds, of laughter and fireside friendliness in inns. They, too, must have known that on any fine morning soon a young woman with violets at her breast and 'The Purple Land' under her arm would walk into the corner tuck-shop at Harrow and have lunch with—her son. And didn't they all catch their breath at the sight of that big blue poster on the dock wall there, saying that Pavlova was dancing that same night, up in London?

A. W.

A BRACE OF BAD WOMEN

BY IVOR BROWN

The Flame. By Charles Méré. Adapted into English by James Bernard Fagan. Wyndham's Theatre.

A Magdalen's Husband. Adapted from the novel of Vincent Brown by Milton Rosmer and Edward Percy. St. Martin's Theatre. (Play-box Matinée Season.)

THESE two plays are both concerned with fallen women and the effort to put frailty on its feet again; there the similarity ends. In treatment they are poles asunder. The English piece just fails because it does not concede enough to the playhouse; the French piece fails utterly because it concedes everything to the playhouse, and is raddled in grease-paint from start to finish. Thirty years ago, when these heavily grease-painted plays were in vogue, Cleo of 'The Flame' might have swept into popularity on the skirts of her greater sisters, Paula and Magda. But our stage has outgrown these ladies, and the fact that 'The Flame' should be described as "a new French play" is merely another example of the amazing insularity of France. The Parisian playwrights go their own, old monotonous way, untouched by any European movement. So far from being moved by Teutonic "expressionism" they have not even caught up with English realism. 'The Flame' rises from an altar whose gods are dead, outside of France.

We begin at Lord Blantyre's study in England. Years ago in Paris, Cleo, of the Casino de Paris, had borne him a son whom he took back to England when he discovered that Cleo had no notion of the importance of being motherly. Now the boy has grown up, and Cleo's maternal instinct has undergone a sudden change for the bricker. She invades England and demands that Blantyre shall let her see her son. Blantyre, having told his son that his mother is dead, is in no mood to give Cleo any more convenience than an income; a spirited conversation is held in the peer's study, and clichés hurtle like brick-bats through the air. Elderly English diplomatists may from time to time be cornered by their discarded mistresses, but that the ladies on these occasions talk like Salvation Army converts while the gentlemen play up to them by observing "There is One above us Who is our judge" I entirely refuse to believe. When Cleo shrieked: "I've been a bad lot, a damned bad lot," one could almost hear the pennies falling into the gutter. This is not quite the way things happen. However, Blantyre on his death-bed appears to have babbled o' the Elysian fields and even of the Casino de Paris, so young Hugo goes in search of his mother, whom he finds in one of those Moatmartre cabarets (known mainly to dramatists) where champagne is spilled to the tune of 'No Bananas.' At the moment of Hugo's entry Cleo is a leading chorister in this desperate glee-party, and he is deeply vexed; however, he bids her to his room at the Ritz next morning, whither she is followed by her present lover, a sturdy ruffian called Boussat.

To discover this liaison is the next section of Hugo's French Course, and for him it is by no means French without tears. Having wept away his shame, he then asks Cleo to leave Boussat and come with him and be his mother. Boussat, who is genuinely fond of Cleo, gives Hugo his opinion of English aristocrats, and behaves in general like a strong but far from silent man. Whereupon Cleo fires a pistol into his wrist and Boussat yields to gunfire what he would not concede to argument. Hugo takes his reclaimed mother to a Swiss hotel, with the finest mountain views and a high social tone, and there finds that Cleo is still trailing a cloud or two from the Casino de Paris. Her vulgarity embarrasses his friends, disturbs his fiancée, and makes him realize that he cannot be both his mother's and his father's son. However, Cleo cuts the knot by returning to Boussat, in whom pistol-shots are apparently no hindrance to a loving heart.

The result, naturally, is a play for very simple souls. Character is buried under a load of "situation." Feuilleton folk talk feuilleton English in feuilleton attitudes. Mr. Fagan has done so much good work for

the English theatre and knows modern stagecraft so well that he will scarcely intend us to think twice about Cleo; he will surely also understand that Los Angeles turns out this kind of thing with more pomp, circumstance and dispatch than the stage can ever command. He was better served by his players than by his original author. Miss Violet Vanbrugh, who was given the warmest reception by a faithful public, handled the agonies and exultations of Cleo with considerable and skilful emphasis, while Mr. Sam Livesey, as Boussat, once more reminded us that he has genuine, natural force, and that such force will prop up almost any piece. Mr. Dawson Milward and Mr. Ralph Forbes had terribly hard work, as Blantyre père et fils, to rescue their parts from the morass of staginess; their work of salvage was heroic.

To walk across from Wyndham's to the St. Martin's is to pass from Dithering Heights to Doleful Down. Joan Potten, the Magdalen of Mr. Vincent Brown's novel and the Rosmer-Percy play, is a girl of West Sussex, seduced by a little town-rat called Anscombe and rescued from drifting into prostitution by marriage with Martin Potten, a boisterous but oddly sensitive yokel. What Potten cannot abide is Joan's new-found saintliness when matched with the memory of her full-blooded past. He tortures himself and tortures her by bringing Anscombe to his cottage; the presence of Anscombe drives Joan in horror to the protection of another villager, Zeekel Draicott, who kills Potten in a brawl. Anscombe is thought guilty, but Draicott confesses and is hanged for the murder. And there we leave the Magdalen of West Sussex.

Her tragedy has a genuine psychological quality, but has not been shaped into the taut, effective symmetry of the playhouse. Character is on top of "situation" here, and the characters are subtle, definite creations. The fallacy that villagers can only entertain the most obvious emotions and express them in words of one syllable receives no support from the authors, whose work has power and dignity. The complexity of the Magdalen seemed to elude Miss Moyna MacGill, but otherwise the acting was of the highest vehemence or the most poignant quietude, as occasion demanded. Particularly brilliant in its sombre fatalism was the vision of Draicott, the murderer in spite of himself, given by Mr. Ian Hunter. In detail the play was moving and beautiful; as a whole it dragged, and I left it with a sense of bewilderment at this contradiction. Wherein did it fail?

It failed, I must suppose, by the lack of that technical adroitness, that manipulation of clash and conflict into an ascending crisis which are the essentials of playhouse discipline. Let a play be frankly a discussion and it will live, however discursive, in exact proportion to the agility of the author's mind. Shaw is here the model. But once bring a story to the stage and only at your own peril will you defy the stage's own technique. Too much of this technique is worse than too little. 'The Flame,' which deals in conventional scene-making puppets instead of in human beings created by authentic observation, seemed to me far more wearisome than this Sussex play, which deals in genuine human beings who cannot round off their scenes. But yet, one concludes, those scenes must be rounded off if a stage-story is to be a good stage-play. A novelist can play tricks with form that the dramatist dare not take. The rules of the playwright's game have varied enormously down the ages, but there have always been rules. Art is no worse for such discipline; often the tighter the discipline the better the art. There is nobler English poetry packed within the rigid confines of the sonnet than is ever likely to emerge in the anarchy of free verse. So with the theatre. We have evolved our technique of construction and condensation; that technique must be shattered altogether (Shaw has done it in one way and the Germans are doing it in another), but if it is retained it must be respected. 'A Magdalen's Husband' must have been a novel of insight and high narrative power; the insight remains in the play, but the narrative has slipped through the adapters' fingers. But I am glad to have seen their attempt.

Correspondence

LITIGANTS AT THE COMÉDIE FRANCAISE

(FROM OUR FRENCH CORRESPONDENT)

READERS versed in French literature will infer from the above title that Racine's 'Les Plaideurs'—which seems so sketchy to people nurtured on Shakespeare, but seems so delightfully Attic to us—has had another chance. Not at all. Madame Silvain, wife of no less a person than M. Silvain, Dean of the *Comédie*, having been superannuated by an overwhelming vote of the *Sociétaires*, ratified by the Minister of Fine Arts, refuses to bow to the verdict, and appeals to the strong arm of the law. She says confidentially to friends, who obligingly communicate it to the Press, that she does not really care for staying on and acting the *jeunes premières* when she would prefer so much to be playing with her grandchildren, but she wants the world to know at last how jealous actors are of one another, and how full of divisions and partisanship even such an exalted place as the *Comédie française* can be. Meanwhile, the *Comédie* sent for its counsel, Maître Henri-Robert—of course, the cream of the French Bar, elected the other day to the French Academy—and Maître Henri-Robert said that he was sure to win, and Madame Silvain should never get those three hundred thousand francs she claims so jauntily as a mere moral reparation or a symbol, and legal proceedings, if there should be any, could only turn against her who initiated them. A few years ago people would not have failed to say it was disgusting to see a nation as attentive as France is to histrions and their trifling affairs. It cannot be said to-day. The newspapers certainly give the proper space to Madame Silvain's case, but they undoubtedly take a vast deal more interest in the British election and the prophecies of Mr. Tom Shaw, and we have become quite as serious as M. Demolins wished us to be. But should some political Madame Silvain in London make it public at last that politicians are actuated by all sorts of motives and that Parliaments are full of divisions and partisanship we should stand convicted of frivolousness again.

There has been of late years a marked effort in the *Comédie française* to reform itself, but no sooner did the *Sociétaires* reveal their intention to modernize their repertoires, admit that they were not faultless, and open their ranks to young talents hatched elsewhere than at the Conservatoire, at the *Comédie*, or in the 'bus running between the two institutions, than the whole world exclaimed with surprise and delight that this proved how imperfect they must always have been. Joutet, who is a unique actor, having wonderful success at the *Comédie des Champs-Élysées* in 'Knock,' M. Jules Romains's new play, critics remark with a shrug of their shoulders that the *Théâtre français* had the refusal of that play; but when a long list is given of new plays, sometimes by quite unknown authors, accepted by the *Comédie* mothers of families complain that they cannot take their daughters to the *Théâtre français*, as they used to, without previously reading the newspaper accounts; old *abonnés* declare that the women are not what they used to be in their younger days, that it is in vain that Mademoiselle Sorel has such success and such jewels, is met at Marseilles by an Egyptian high official, and enters Cairo, Cleopatra-like, in her own galley, for she still looks like a pretty schoolgirl in comparison with her predecessors, and even Madame Bartet, whom we all knew, towered above her as a queen above a *soubrette*. On the other hand, Antoine—who is a good judge, who was, is, and will always remain a professional, even if he has turned writer and devotes studious mornings in his beautiful old house on the Pont-Neuf to rather desultory but all the same interesting articles—Antoine complains that the physique of the men has gone down, and the best of them look puny compared with Mounet-Sully, and never produce the volume of voice which used to fill the house the moment Coquelin was on the stage.

However, it remains true that the *Comédie* wants to keep up its standards, and that while people are criticizing it they cannot help believing in their hearts that it is, with the company of the Moscow Art Players, the greatest dramatic school that ever was known. Madame Duse recently wrote to Stanislavsky complimenting his troupe on their "freedom from the Parisian genre." It is a fact that compared with the Russian actors the *Sociétaires* of the *Comédie française* look, not Parisian, in the *boulevardier* sense of the word, but at any rate Academic, that is to say, the spectator is conscious while listening to them of the constant presence of art as well as of gifts. But this is precisely what the *Comédie française* is intended to do. When Napoleon created it, singularly enough, in Moscow, he wanted it to be a school as well as a theatre, and here again his intuition was right. The *Comédie* has been flourishing for more than a hundred years, helping and not at all hampering such talents as Rachel's or Sarah Bernhardt's, and there is no sign of its approaching decadence. Can anybody expect such duration in the Moscow players? There are many nights when Eleonora Duse declares she simply cannot act, and her impresario (see his melancholy 'Memoirs') has to break the news to a disappointed and soon angry audience. This never was the case with even the most temperamental artists at the *Comédie*, and when Mademoiselle Malibran's manager asked, three days after the death of the singer's mother: "Isn't she ever going to sing? *tant que sa mère sera morte?*" he was starting from an academic conviction.

The value of the *Comédie française* is only that of a superior organization, but it attracts nearly all the superior talent in French-speaking countries, and gives it the infallibility which only high training can secure. There is more fervidly artistic feeling at the *Vieux-Colombier* than at the *Comédie française*, yet how amateurish Copeau seems compared with a mere but thorough artist like Got used to be! The possession of a gift is an extraordinary fascination, but its development to the point where it seems to live in every fibre of its possessor, artificial though it may be, dazzles good judges even more. The esteem in which not only Ingres but Bouguereau and even Cabanel are held by the extreme schools of painting testifies to the superiority of developed craftsmanship over the splendid germ known as talent. In the same way, when we hear that Florent Schmitt and Darius Milhaud constantly speak of Gounod with the most profound respect, we are tempted to think that here may be an attitude or even a pose. In reality this is nothing else than the true artist's admiration for perfect technique. The *Comédie française* has preserved the secret of vivifying methods raising men and women high above themselves. I never pass my concierge's lodge at hours when her daughter is there—a typical fourteen-year-old Parisienne, slender, pallid and graceful, with luminous orbs, a golden voice and the perfect utterance of Paris-born children—without remembering that half a dozen of the *Comédie* princesses were born in narrow precincts of the same kind. Racine, the Conservatoire and the slow stages through which they pass at the *Comédie française* achieve that wonder.

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS AND THE EXCHEQUER

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT)

Guernsey, January 8

THE decision of the Channel Island authorities to make no contribution to the heavily-burdened Imperial Exchequer is a most regrettable step and one which cannot fail to reflect upon the community as a whole. During the war there were minor incidents of a similar nature, such as the controversy with Lord Rhondda's Food Control over the supply of eggs required for soldiers in hospital, incidents which passed almost unnoticed in the tide of larger issues,

but which must be charged against the inhabitants, occurring as they did at a time when large fortunes were being made by growers and farmers, and general prosperity reigned in the Islands.

Local taxation continues to be exceedingly light and prices have risen enormously for local products since the war, which has raised the standard of living for the visitor and unemployed resident to the great benefit of the grower and local shopkeeper, who are often one and the same person. It cannot, therefore, be said that necessity or distress have in any way dictated this parsimonious refusal.

It has been clearly pointed out to the States that the privileges enjoyed without interference and benefits bestowed by the Imperial Government merit some sort of return, but the heart of the Norman is still hard, and his nature is of the "take-everything-and-give-nothing" variety, more associated with the Gallic peasant than with a seafaring stock.

Naval and military protection, postal and telegraphic facilities, and a most elaborate and costly series of local beacons and lighthouses are all enjoyed free of charge at the expense of the British taxpayer, who has no power to levy contribution or in any way interfere with local legislation or port dues.

The Islander wants it all his own way. He is loud in his disapproval of any settlers from the mainland, who, he says, have one and all descended upon his soil to avoid British taxation, albeit contributing to his own. His high prices have almost eliminated the colony of retired service officers who were resident before the war, and many others with small "fixed" incomes. He looks with contempt upon the harmless summer visitor whom he almost universally exploits and flaunts his independence from British dominance before all and sundry.

That this policy of insularity and feudalism is short-sighted in these days of drastic changes must be evident. There will most certainly come a time when lesser communities will be forced to merge in greater ones for the benefit of all, and the day is not far off when the adjacent islands around Great Britain will be obliged to abandon their selfish and antiquated systems of government and submit to the central authority upon which they depend.

With this cloud upon the horizon, we cannot congratulate the Mandarins of the Islands upon their parsimonious withholding of a small portion of their local sunshine.

Verse

THE CRANE

ASLANT, it cleanly cuts the air,
And high above the city swings,
With splendid ease, its freight to where
Arise the lofty scaffoldings.

Afar its poise and beauty sing
The proud achievements of our clay,
Who out of earth's dark wildness wring
A purpose to enrich the day.

O, rain may come, and come the wind,
And deeply may the darkness fall;
But clean and splendid swings the mind,
And builds throughout a city wall.

PERCY RIPLEY

¶ The Index to Volume 136 of the SATURDAY REVIEW is now on sale, price 6d. Subscribers to that volume may obtain it free on application to the Publishers, 9, King Street, W.C.2.

Letters to the Editor

¶ The Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW welcomes the free expression in these columns of genuine opinion on matters of public interest, although he disclaims responsibility alike for the opinions themselves and the manner of their expression.

¶ Letters which are of reasonable brevity, and are signed with the writer's name, are more likely to be published than long and anonymous communications.

¶ Letters on topical subjects, intended for publication the same week, should reach us by the first post on Wednesday.

THE SOCIALIST MENACE

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—You say in your issue of December 29: "No one knows what the future has in store, but we imagine that those who are apprehensive of red revolution will be as widely mistaken as those who regard the advent of the Labour Party as a kind of millennium." If we Conservatives don't know exactly what is before us in the event of a Socialist Government, it is largely because we pay no heed to Socialist warnings, which are very definite and decisive on the subject. Thus Mr. Maxton—representing the Socialist extremists who are the driving force of the party—speaking at Glasgow the other day declared that:

The one and only purpose of the movement they had built up in Glasgow, through great trial and tribulation, was the abolition of poverty and want, and they were going back to the House of Commons to do what the movement had been built up for, and to do nothing else. . . . The Labour Party might establish a precedent for a Government remaining in office after 20 defeats. In the interval they would not "let down" the Socialist standard one half inch. The big problem that faced the people who were going to govern was the problem of compelling the wealthy to disgorge their wealth.

Here we have the Socialist policy in a nutshell—the spoliation of the well-to-do in order to "abolish poverty and want." Now three months in power would be quite enough to enable the Socialists to bring in a Budget which, by doubling the income-tax and the super-tax, would ruin instantly and completely three-fourths of the taxpayers in the kingdom. There would be no "red revolution," but the dislocation of industry and the impoverishment of its leaders, the waste of money and the bribery and corruption which always follow spoliation, would produce a demoralization quite as great as civil war itself could effect.

The moral, surely, is that it behoves all Conservative M.P.s and all their supporters outside Parliament to show their readiness to help a Liberal administration provided it is pledged to economy and tranquillity—the two great needs of the country to-day. To this end we must drop, wholly and without reservation, the policy of Tariff Reform which, whatever its merits from the Imperial standpoint, has no connection with the Conservative principles of personal freedom and the rights of private ownership.

I am, etc.,

C. F. RYDER

Scarcroft, near Leeds

[Our correspondent's fears of doubled income-tax and super-tax could never be realized without the support of Liberals in the House for such a policy—a contingency which we conceive to be quite unlikely, to say the least.—ED. S.R.]

OUR PRESENT DISCONTENTS

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—Permit me to thank Mr. Filson Young for his admirable reflections in 'A Pilgrim's Progress' on the present condition of our times. You mention that the Christian religion seems to be failing to keep the Spirit of Christ alive in England. May I suggest that the failure lies, not with our religion, but with the Churches? In the past the Churches have been too much concerned with their internecine differences to apply themselves to their true task of manifesting the

Spirit of Christ, but in that respect I hope and believe that a better day is dawning.

There is to be held in Birmingham next April a Conference on Christian Politics, Economics, and Citizenship. The Conference is representative of all the Christian Churches, and it has been called under the conviction that the Christian faith, rightly interpreted and consistently followed, gives the vision and power essential for solving the problems of to-day. The purpose of it is to ascertain how the ethics of Christ can be applied to the solving of those problems; in short, the ideal of the promoters of the movement, which is known as "Copec," is nothing less than the building up of a truly Christian Order of Human Society.

The essence of the Copec movement lies in the association of all the Churches in a bond of fellowship for personal service and personal sacrifice in the name of Christ. If the Copec ideal is realized to any extent whatever, the movement will include and co-ordinate the work of Toc H and all similar associations of which the aim is a fellowship of service for the common good. Therein, so it seems to me, lies the one hope of raising our civilization from the awful abyss of selfishness and materialism into which it is sinking.

I am, etc.,

Norbury, S.W.

ERIC S. FLEETWOOD

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—Mr. Filson Young, in your issue of December 29, takes leave without regret of the year that has just passed, and turns pessimistic eyes and pen towards the new. But to many of us it is not difficult to find in memories of the late departed year depths of consolation and peaks of hopefulness that distinguish it in a marked degree from some of its predecessors. The pessimism to which Mr. Young gives expression is a natural outcome of our method of living, and the cure is not one that can be obtained by distributing pills wholesale to society at large, but rather must come through individual consciousness.

When Mr. Young complains that "the Christian religion seems to be failing to keep the spirit of Christ alive in England," he voices a truth that is not peculiar to England, but is almost universally the case. We have only to let our memory dwell upon the discussions of form in religion that have taken place in England during the past year, and to read in the American papers the reports of the bitter and heated arguments between the Modernists and Fundamentalists, to realize that the much-needed spiritual and moral interpretation of the lessons of Christ has given way to a new and debased spirit of indifference, disbelief, or whatever we may choose to call it, on the part of the clergy, that leaves the individual without guidance or hope at a time when spiritual consolation and enlightenment are most needed.

The lesson of Christ's teachings and sacrifice, interpreted in their full spiritual and moral sense, unobscured by arguments as to form and by trappings that no longer impress or deceive even the most lowly, is the sublimest inheritance that man possesses. Translated into his daily language and made a living part of his relations with his fellow-man, there is no limit to its power to lift him to mental, moral, and physical heights of which he is now for the most part ignorant. If this lesson of love and sacrifice is not painstakingly brought home to the individual, and held up before him as the ideal which all men must strive to achieve, by what other force can we expect to lift the consciousness of our fellow-creatures to their place in creation and to their duties toward the social fabric of which they are a part?

The powers of fear and hatred to which Mr. Young refers can only be overcome by the powers of love, which are infinitely greater. But the individual must be taught to feel and to use them.

I am, etc.,

MARGARET CARPENTER

Chatou (S. et O.)

CLEANING OLD MASTERS

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—May I as an habitual visitor to the National Gallery speak of the shock I received there last Sunday afternoon when I saw Titian's 'Venus and Adonis' which has recently been cleaned? I came to it with an open and unbiassed mind. I confess that for a moment or so I didn't recognize the picture as I stood before it. And then when I did, I had, as I say, a shock. Was it possible that this was the glorious picture I had admired for so many years? The golden tone was gone—and with it the lovely unity and harmony which constituted one of its chief features. Whatever poetry there was in it has also been all but cleaned out of it. Did the picture really look like this when it came freshly from Titian's hand? I wonder much. I know nothing whatever about the art or science of picture cleaning, and for anything I can tell it may at the present day have been brought to perfection. But the science is rather a sorry one, I feel. It has destroyed one more illusion. I used to think the 'Venus and Adonis' in our National Gallery a very beautiful and sumptuous picture. It is hardly that now. And as I looked at the reformed thing a fear suddenly arose in my mind that the next victim on the list would be, perhaps, Titian's incomparable 'Bacchus and Ariadne'; and at that my alarm and indignation got the better of any hesitation I may have felt about addressing a letter of protest.

It is unfortunate there is no Act of Parliament strictly forbidding any person, or body of persons, however eminent, competent and well-intentioned, to tamper in any way with the Old Masters in our national collections. After all, they are public property. Let the persons entrusted with the care of our treasures experiment with the colour of the walls and the arrangement of the works displayed upon them as much as they like; no great harm is done. If a mistake is made, it can easily be rectified. If an ingenious commentator offers to emend the text of a dead poet it is left to our taste and judgment to accept or reject his emendation. He does not at the same time destroy beyond recovery the original text. But in dealing with a picture as the 'Venus and Adonis' in our National Gallery has been dealt with, the mischief which is done is irreparable.

I am, etc.,

HENRY BISHOP

20 Paulton Square, Chelsea

THE POPULATION OF MACEDONIA

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—May I point out, with reference to your Note on January 5, that besides Serbians, Bulgars and Greeks there are still in Macedonia a considerable number of Turks, who, after the Bulgars, form the largest section of the population?

The prevalence, under the present regime, of incendiarism, torture and murder shows how unfairly the Turkish Government was criticized for failing to evolve an entirely satisfactory method of administering a country inhabited by Greeks, Vlachs, Albanians, Turks, Bulgars and Serbians, all ready and anxious to cut one another's throats. The misery and racial hatreds existing there to-day are, indeed, a commentary on the enthusiasm with which our well-meaning and often prejudiced idealists welcomed the elimination of Turkish rule.

I am, etc.,

C. F. DIXON-JOHNSON

Croft-on-Tees, Darlington

PROHIBITION AND LOCAL OPTION

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Fred Carter, who asks for evidence on the Carlisle scheme, I suggest that it will only be necessary for him to look up the statistics and

returns for drunkenness to show that the great experiment in that district has not shown any more value as regards temperance than the good sense of the population in other districts, and in some cases not as much.

To reply to his points :—(1) When the Liquor Control Board was abolished, if the promise given at the time of control being instituted was to be adhered to, the Carlisle area should have also been decontrolled, and not have become a Government monopoly.

(2) The reduction of licences by 50 per cent. is not necessarily reform in any strict sense; it merely means preference for the other houses in the same area. The removal of insanitary and unsuitable houses has not been affected only in the Carlisle area; the justices have power to do this if considered expedient. As regards the reconstruction of the houses, if the authorities there, with all their powers, cannot make a better show than the present, the sooner they give it up the better. Perhaps Mr. Carter will refer to Sir A. Holbrook's speech in the House: if he has not seen them for himself, it will explain matters better than I can in the space of a letter.

(3) and (4) Does Mr. Carter really suggest that licensees in practice press their beverages on individual customers, or use persuasion "to have another"? Has he not seen for himself privately owned up-to-date houses where, when the demand exists, customers can obtain all they wish for in the way of food; if the demand does not exist in many cases it is useless to provide it, and even the persuasive powers of the food-commissioned fixed-salaried Carlisle managers would hardly succeed in selling it under those circumstances. Some while ago the only "food" obtainable even in a few of these reconstructed Carlisle houses was a sandwich of somewhat questionable age.

(5) There are none so blind as those that will not see. Also, a fish salesman does not usually cry "stinking fish for sale" if he wants to carry on his business. On the other hand, even prominent people who were at one time in favour of the scheme have stated that it is a failure as such.

Mr. Carter says that he is not a prohibitionist, and yet one of the great points of his argument is that the experiment has reduced licences by 50 per cent., which apparently he considers an advantage *per se* of the control; everyone should realize that next to prohibition the reduction of licences under any circumstances, whether redundant or not, is considered by the so-called temperance party the next best thing to their chief aim.

I am, etc.,

Temple, E.C. 4

JOHN A. PACE

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—The conclusion of the Rev. A. Jeans Courtney that the trade is, in principle, in favour of Local Option has no secure, logical foundation; but it would seem more important to observe that, in the consideration of any legislative measure, statesmanship cannot ignore the aims of its promoters, for to understand clearly their motives is the surest method of determining its scope. Further, the mere fact of a measure being democratic is by no means, in these days, the greatest thing to be said in its favour. Indeed, there are more vital principles—for which the name of England stands—such as private judgment, individual liberty, even personal taste, which Local Option lamentably ignores.

But your correspondent is most startling when he asserts that Local Option may be dismissed from our national life if it does not sufficiently place the havoc drink (excessive?) works upon the heads of the people themselves. Surely this is the very superfluity of naughtiness! Is it not tragically true that the havoc which drink (excessive), or any other vice, causes is visited with remorseless vengeance upon the heads of the people themselves? The soul that sinneth—and the body, too—it shall die, without any human (or Parliamentary) intervention.

I am, etc.,

Chelsea

PHILIP WICKSTEAD

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—When the Liquor Control Board was dissolved in 1921 the Carlisle State Management Area was retained under the administration of the Home Office, because what had been commenced as a war-time emergency scheme had proved a great success as a measure of practical social reform. I do not know what authority Mr. Anderson possesses for his statement that the public do not want State trading in liquor. How does he know?

Mr. Anderson does not appear to be aware that the liquor trade is a monopoly. But at the same time I doubt if he will get any support for his plea for "private competitive enterprise" in the sale of liquor. This trade has always received special attention from the Legislature—not only here, but in every civilized country. But as a monopoly it also possesses special privileges, which have been exploited for the purpose of concentrating on the sale of beer as producing the maximum of profit. Its duty to the public has been neglected, and so we have the drink shop instead of the real refreshment house for the public. The holders of the monopoly have failed: we cannot have free trade in drink: but under a State-owned scheme we could have the business conducted as at Carlisle, where the houses have been reconstructed, all unnecessary ones being closed, and where over half a million meals were served in 1922.

I am, etc.,

Ruislip

J. DOUGLAS EDWARDS

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—I see Mr. Carter recommends the P.R.H.A. and the P.H.T. because "public convenience" is "the first consideration, not the profits of the shareholders." Still, the shareholders in these organisations get 7 per cent. to 7½ per cent. for their admirable disinterestedness. Under the Carlisle system the manager is in his job for the wages he gets, personal pride in his work does not enter; under private ownership the licensee makes the success and reputation of his house his personal concern. To the former it is a soulless business, to the latter a thing he cares for and protects. Machines may give good service, but the human element gives better.

I am, etc.,

"Westgate," Sudbury

H. W. THOMAS

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW

SIR,—State purchase, combined with local option, is an impracticable policy. We can have one or the other, but a combination of the two will lead to a terrible waste of the taxpayers' money. In fact, it might easily lead to a loss of something like two hundred million pounds.

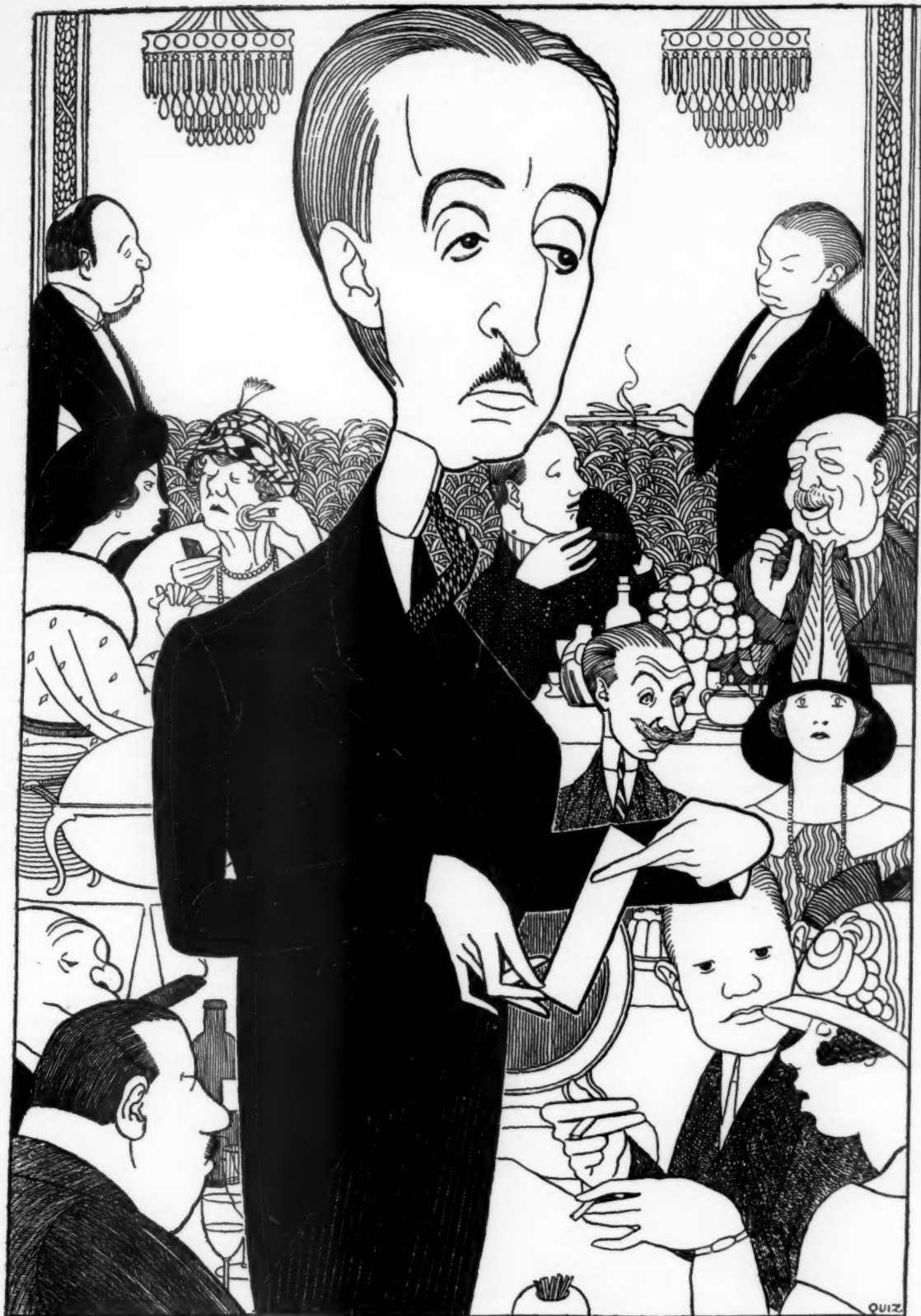
The following view of Lord Sumner, chairman of the committee which considered this question, will be of interest. He said:

If you could depend on the liquor trade in a particular area being carried out without loss, or even at a profit, it might be tolerable for that area to vote that the Exchequer should spend a few millions to buy it, because they wished to get rid of it. But you have to face the possibility that, having bought out the trade in that area, it would thereafter be carried on at a loss, and most of the money would be thrown away. I contend that it is quite intolerable that a single county or a smaller area should be allowed, by its vote, to vote away public money on a local investment which is likely to result in loss. It is contrary to every principle of sound finance that the money of the Exchequer should be voted away by the voters in a local area upon a limited issue like this.

I am, etc.,

FRED STEWART

Westminster, S.W.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ, No. 81
THE EMBASSY CLUB
By 'Quiz'

Reviews

A HAZARDOUS JOURNEY

By *Camel and Car to the Peacock Throne.* By Major E. Alexander Powell. Long. 15s. net.

MAJOR POWELL and his friends showed a fine spirit of enterprise and an innate optimism in undertaking so hazardous a journey. To cross the Syrian desert by camel from Damascus to Kabaissa, to travel thence by train and motor-car to Teheran, to return by the same route to Baghdad, to set out once more northward to Mosul, and then back across the sun-parched desert to Aleppo, would be a venture to daunt the bravest, but this venture Major Powell and his friends undertook and successfully accomplished. They are to be congratulated upon their achievement. It was a journey fraught with incidents, some amusing and some perilous, but all such as to bring a craving for travel, a secret envy, to those who read. Major Powell has not wasted his opportunities, and that portion of the book which deals with the journey, which describes the places visited and the scenes surveyed, is full of entertainment.

With the political portion of Major Powell's narrative there will not be such general agreement. That was hardly to be expected, but the point of view of an independent witness from the United States of America cannot but be of value. With his summary of the present position in Palestine few will differ:

Looking toward the future, it seems to me that the relations between Jew and Moslem are not likely to improve until the moderate elements of Jewry replace the extremists who are at present in control of Zionism's programme in Palestine, and until the Zionists make it unmistakably clear that, in working for a national home for the Jews, they are *not* working for ultimate Jewish political control of the Holy Land.

Major Powell is severe upon the policy pursued by this country in Iraq. He criticizes strongly the actions which led up to the proclamation of the Emir Feisul as King of Iraq. There is certainly room for criticism of this as of many other acts of the British Government in the Middle East since the Armistice, but, like so many other critics of this country's policy in those parts, Major Powell has little in the way of constructive suggestion to offer us. He would, apparently, hand back Mesopotamia to Turkish misrule on the grounds that the Turks and the peoples of Iraq are co-religionists. But Major Powell himself tells us that one of the objections to the appointment of the Emir Feisul as King of Iraq was that that monarch belongs to the Sunni branch of Islam, whereas the majority of his subjects are Shi'ahs. He adds, "the two factions holding each other in greater detestation than they do Christians." The Turks are Sunnis! No, even the most enthusiastic admirer of the Turk, and we should be the first to pay tribute to his many fine qualities, would not claim for him that he is a capable, or even a tolerably efficient, administrator, and Iraq needs wise administration and opportunities for development. The return of the Turk would set the seal of despair upon the future of the people of Iraq.

In a chapter headed 'Politics and Petroleum in Persia' Major Powell lays stress upon the importance of Persia as an oil-bearing country, and upon the effect which her oil has had upon Anglo-Persian relations. We believe that the importance of this is frequently exaggerated. It is certainly an exaggeration to say of Persia: "During the last two decades, therefore, the ancient empire has been ground between two mill-stones—the British greed for oil and the Russian lust for land." To Britain Persia is important; was, indeed, important long before her oilfields were discovered, not because of her wealth in that mineral, but because of her geographical position as a neighbour of the British Empire in India. Persia controlled by a foreign Power actuated by motives of hostility to Britain would be a menace to India. For this reason we always have

resisted, and always must resist, any attempt by any foreign Power to dominate Persia and her people. But this is no reason why we should hamper Persian Governments and hinder their attempts towards progress. There would be no logic in such an attitude, and such is not our attitude. Persia strong and united, well-governed and advancing steadily upon the road of progress, Persia a vigorous and stable Power able to resist influence and interference from whatsoever quarter it might come, such a Persia would be an ideal neighbour to our empire in India. Is such a Persia possible? Certainly it is; but its achievement lies in the hands of the Persian people. Our own position there has steadily been consolidated and improved during the last two years.

ANNE BOLEYN

The Life of Anne Boleyn. By Philip W. Sergeant. Hutchinson. 18s. net.

STRANGE is the fate that pursues men and women after their deaths, if their lives have been of any importance. Thirty years ago the pendulum of the popular historian used to swing gracefully from Bloody Mary to the Morning Star of the Reformation, and now Mary Tudor is acknowledged, even by stout Protestants who have the gravest doubts as to her final destination, to have been the only respectable monarch of her dynasty. Henry VII. was a cold-blooded murderer; Henry VIII. was that and worse, one of the vilest wretches who ever cursed the earth with his presence; Edward VI. died too young for us to judge him, though he seems to have promised well in the matter of want of heart; of Elizabeth the more we learn the less we can explain with any satisfaction. But Mary is to us the real heroine of this very interesting book. Her mother was no common woman, but she had the stolid virtues of her family; and hence, though she stood up with dauntless courage to Henry VIII., who very probably murdered her, she is not personally attractive to us any more than she was to her husband. Mr. Sergeant has very cleverly steered clear of all the dull detail as to her first marriage which makes such dreary reading in other books on the period. Mary was but a child, and separated from her mother, yet what a will she had; we can almost see her setting her little teeth.

As to Anne Boleyn, we are disposed to hold her entirely innocent on the main count, though we are far from liking her. Mr. Sergeant seems to have taken her measure well enough. Like her unfortunate brother, Lord Rochford, she illustrated what Lord Acton used to call "the mystery of the Renaissance," though she was hardly as thoroughgoing as some of the women of her age. Hence, indeed, her fall. She loved power and pleasure and admiration, and would go to great lengths to gain her ends; but she was not exactly heartless as were many of those who led the world from the days, say, of Pius II. onwards. Nothing can be more dramatic than the situation of the unfortunate woman when the death of Katharine of Aragon seemed to have settled all her difficulties. On the contrary, it altered the whole political vista and made her an easy prey to men like Cromwell and her husband, men of the same general type as herself, but abler and entirely merciless. Mr. Sergeant tells his terrible story—it is one of the most horrible incidents in all history—well, and as we read the last chapter we feel that the punishment so nobly borne has settled the account, and more than settled it.

That she was proud, ambitious, a foe to her foes, even to vindictiveness, given to speaking her mind, careless of speech, gaiety-loving, is evident. But she was also brave, true to her friends, lavish with her gifts where liking or charity led her, sincere in her religious opinions, and withal a woman of genuine intellectual power.

With this new view of Anne we are inclined to agree.

PRE-COLUMBIAN AMERICA

Myths of Pre-Columbian America. By Donald A. Mackenzie. Gresham Publishing Co. 12s. net.

IT is perhaps correct to say that the great problems connected with the early history of America have just reached the stage at which they become really interesting to the world at large; a part of a greater whole. Hitherto it has been impossible to come to any general conclusions, or possibly historians could come to too many, because the necessary materials had not been gathered and sorted out. Now, however, owing to the labours of a large number of scholars, working often under most difficult conditions, we can consider such basic questions as the date at which America received its population and the connection which exists between the early beliefs of America and those of other countries.

Mr. Mackenzie traces with great skill, and in a language which all can understand, the links between the old and the new world, and shows us resemblances between beliefs and myths in India and China and those in America which cannot be the result of chance. Those who stand by the Monroe doctrine in ethnological and mythological matters will have great difficulty in explaining the prominent position which is occupied in early American art by the Indian elephant; and Chapter XIII., which connects the story of Yappan with the Mahā-bhārata, is full of interesting suggestion.

Mr. Mackenzie deals with other and similar cases, and we feel sure that his conclusions, which are very modestly stated, though possibly they may be modified in this or that detail, will be ultimately accepted. Our reason for thinking so is that he does not, like too many exponents of folk-lore, sit down with a ready-made theory; he builds up his doctrine from a large and increasing mass of archaeological data. We need hardly add that it is a strange and fascinating world to which he introduces us, full of a certain curious softness, but full also of refined cruelty. While we feel the presence of Oriental legend, we recognize the sea change that the thoughts of India and China have undergone, a change which is the effect of climate, country, and the human mind.

FROM THREE CONTINENTS

By Tigris and Euphrates. By E. S. Stevens. Hurst and Blackett. 18s. net.

The Ivory Raiders. By Major H. Rayne. Heinemann. 10s. 6d. net.

Casual Wanderings in Ecuador. By Blair Niles. Long. 12s. 6d. net.

ONE of the most interesting books of travel that we have read for some time is Mrs. Stevens's vivid description of her wanderings beside the waters of Babylon. The author is evidently well acquainted with Mesopotamia, which she prefers to call by its official name of Iraq, and she has an entertaining, gossiping way of imparting her knowledge. The reader of these brightly coloured and amusing pages will feel that he knows much more of the real life and personality of the Iraqi than he would probably have learnt from many more pretentious and statistical works. Mrs. Stevens begins usefully by calling the attention of the English reader to the fact that the Moslem population of Iraq is divided into two main sects, between which the cleavage is almost as strongly marked as that between Catholic and Protestant in Ireland. "Centuries during which the yoke of rulers of a heretic creed has lain heavy on him have made of the Shiah a sullen fellow, jealous and fanatical, and like the Irish Catholic, always 'agin the Government.'" Although the austere sect of the Shiahs actually outnumbers the more liberal-minded Sunnis in Iraq by about five to four, the Shiahs have little voice in the administration, which is still, as it was under the Turks, almost wholly in the hands of the adaptable Sunnis. We are glad to note Mrs. Stevens's testimony to the present Arab Govern-

ment as "unceasing in its desire and attempt to win the loyalty and approbation of its Shiah subjects."

The first part of Mrs. Stevens's book describes a pilgrimage to the holy places of Iraq—the sacred city of Najaf, where the tomb of Ali serves as a centre for all the intrigues of Shiah fanaticism; Kadhimein, where repose the bodies of the seventh and ninth Imams, behind the famous Gate of Roses, "a riot of pink and turquoise blue—exquisitely gay and flower-like"; Samarra with the mysterious cave from which the twelfth Imam is said by Shiah orthodoxy to have disappeared, and from which he will emerge again to judge the world when it is ripe for the triumphant domination of Islam; Kufah, the accursed city, where the martyr Hoseyn was slain. Baghdad, in comparison, is but a secular town, with few ancient monuments; Islam has little veneration for the past in architecture, and never scruples to pull down and rebuild. The singular rock monastery of Rabban Hormuzd is well described, with the rock-cells like martens' nests, in which the despised Christian monks had to take refuge—a feeble folk making their habitation in the rocks. Mrs. Stevens then describes the buried cities of Assyria and Babylonia, with a specially interesting account of Mr. Woolley's recent excavations at Ur of the Chaldees. The rest of her book is devoted to lively sketches of the people of Iraq. It is full of quaint figures, like those of the thorough-going Baptists who are not content to be baptized once or twice, but repeat the ceremony every Sunday, winter and summer, like our own Serpentine enthusiasts, or that of the eminent native polo player who came in conflict with the law, but was let out of prison whenever there was an important match, and returned like a lamb after playing like a lion.

In 'The Ivory Raiders' Major Rayne gives a picturesque account of the day's work of a British administrator in that wild and little-known district which lies to the north-west of the Kenya Colony, bordering on the western shores of Lake Rudolf. He devotes himself especially to the description of "that human side of life which often escapes the attention of more scientific observers," and draws upon a twenty years' unbroken experience of African natives to enliven his story in detail. It is a good story, full of thrilling fights with man and beast, and well illustrating the life of those who hold our outposts of empire.

Mrs. Niles went to Ecuador because all her friends had told her that it was so romantic—"like going back two hundred years." It was certainly a change from New York, and Mrs. Niles got good value for her transportation charges. She has written an interesting account of this out-of-the-world country as it appears to the eyes of a cultivated American woman, and has succeeded in conveying to her readers much of the freshness of the impression which it made upon her. Some excellent photographs by Mr. Niles add to the vividness of the book.

A HISTORY OF INVENTION

Invention the Master-Key to Progress. By Rear-Admiral Bradley A. Fiske. Allen and Unwin 12s. 6d. net.

AS an inventor himself, Admiral Fiske, of the U.S. Navy, is well qualified to describe the fascination and the difficulty of invention. More than thirty years ago he patented the method of pointing guns at sea which has, he tells us, been adopted in all the great navies, under the name of the gun director system. His also is the invention of the torpedo-plane, which is destined to wipe battleships off the face of the ocean in the next great war. "Many Navy officers think it an invention of the first rank of importance," although Secretary Daniels refused to adopt it during the recent difference of opinion. We sincerely trust that it is no personal experience which lends poignancy to Admiral Fiske's complaint that "one of the most unsatisfactory parts of an inventor's experience is the difficulty he has in making other men see the value of his inventions,

combined with the fact that when the invention is finally adopted his part in it is often forgotten, and sometimes intentionally ignored." The financially successful inventor, indeed, is not usually one of the great noteless benefactors of mankind so much as one who "discerns chances for circumventing existing patents while utilizing their basic principles."

Admiral Fiske has written a very interesting history of invention. He gives a wider connotation to the word than is usual, including Cæsar and Alexander, Columbus and Newton in his record. We might certainly speak of the invention of America with as much reason as of the invention of the Cross, but it is more usual to distinguish between discovery and invention, and there does seem to be a good reason for discrimination between the inventor, who combines existing materials into something new, and the discoverer, who opens men's eyes to something which already exists. However, Admiral Fiske is certainly entitled to define his title as he pleases, though we hardly think that he would find it easy to bring the campaigns of Alexander or the strategy of Nelson within the scope of the Patent Office definition that he is fond of quoting—that an invention must be so described that "a person skilled in the art can make and use it." The practical difficulty in these cases is the same as that which Stevenson describes as occurring to the man in a quandary who decides that the thing for him is to do what Napoleon or St. Paul would do in his circumstances—"and there remains only the minor question, What is that?"

The most interesting part of Admiral Fiske's book, to our mind, is the chapter in which he discusses the earliest inventions of all. Man has been happily defined as a tool-using animal, and it is fascinating to meditate on the ways in which the idea of making tools may first have entered the mind of our distant ancestors, soon after they climbed down from their trees. The whole of modern civilization is probably based on flints, for it was the discovery that flint could be made, by "flaking," into a tool with a cutting edge which almost certainly started mankind on the upward journey. The first weapon and tool combined was probably the "first-hatchet," a piece of sharpened flint about nine inches long for grasping in the hand. It is a thousand pities that the history of the earliest inventors is shrouded by a mist even thicker than that of the chieftains who lived before Agamemnon. We shall never know who invented so simple a thing as the wheel, for which there is no hint in nature, or the bow and arrow, or the boat, or the fire-hearth. The Homeric hymn, indeed, attributes the fire-sticks to Hermes, but then who invented Hermes? Admiral Fiske's remarks on the mystery of these earliest inventions are excellent.

BIRDS OR INSECTS? AN AFRICAN ALTERNATIVE

The Natural History of South Africa: Birds.
By F. W. Fitzsimons. Two vols. Longmans.
12s. 6d. net each.

IN a list of accusations against Africa it is written that "the birds have no song." The allegation is untrue, as we trust are other charges in the same list. Africa gives a home in the winter time to many of our European birds, who, like most other birds, only sing in the days of early romance. But others nest in South Africa, and utter pleasing notes that may be called song. The eminence of the English wren, whin, and thrush lies in this, that they sing us—

out of winter's throat,
The young tune with the life ahead.

Probably no birds in any country do quite such good service to man as the birds of Africa, where man's insect enemies are a peculiar menace. They do something better than sing. Mr. Fitzsimons, a supremely

energetic and sedulous observer, is not only among dwellers in Africa in harbouring a sort of terror that one day the insects will arise and chase humanity out of the country. He is perpetually afraid of his own genus being left without allies, in which predicament even his scientific skill—his oil on the breeding waters of the gnats and poison dips for sheep and sprays for fruit—will avail him little. The real Armageddon between man and insect will be won in a short campaign by the insect if the birds are alienated by the yeoman sportsman or ignorant farmer. Scarcely a page of his first volume is free from emphatic evidence that the bird is the friend—the owl and hawk, indeed, the snake, too—that kill the mouse, as well as the swallow and nightjar that destroy the flying insect, the plover and starling that probe the ground, the tit and warbler that search the bough. He preaches a vigorous sermon, of which one may say what was said of the sermon of a certain divine, "It is full of spiritual tips." But in this application the criticism is not unkind. It is all to the good to possess a volume which contains all the latest devices for encouraging birds by the provision of nesting-places, and of saving valuable crops by the offer of counter-attractions. A peculiarly ingenious—and as the reviewer can corroborate—and effective device for the orchard owner is to plant sun-flowers near by. With such seed, and a supply of water within range, birds will leave the fruit alone—unless, it must be confessed the fruit is the strawberry and the bird the blackbird.

The deficiency of the homily is apt to be a lack of charm; and living birds should evoke style from the enthusiastic observer (though perhaps they are often less successful in this regard than fish). And Mr. Fitzsimons is both too earnest and too fond of making the flesh creep with pictures of a world, indeed, of a space between earth and Sirius, made solid with insects increasing in geometric ratio. "They love not poison who do poison need"; and though Mr. Fitzsimons' thesis has the eager approval of all rural economists, they will sigh a little for more discourse on the silver wing, or maternal care, or pretty instinct.

Yet when all is said, the second volume makes up for such deficiencies in the first. It consists of severe classification and concise comment, but the illustrations, both in colour and line, are of the very best, and a sum of knowledge is there which puts Mr. Fitzsimons among the peers of the naturalists of the Empire.

FOREIGN POLICY

The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy,
Vol. II. 1783-1919. Cambridge University
Press. 31s. 6d. net.

AS it deals with three of the great names in British foreign policy—Castlereagh, Canning, and Palmerston—the second volume, just issued, of 'The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy,' is of very special interest. The book begins with two admirable chapters by Professor Alison Phillips and Mr. H. W. V. Temperley. Professor Phillips's brilliant study of Castlereagh not only vindicates anew the real distinction of that statesman, but may be read with great profit at the present time when British political problems touching Europe have something more than a mere resemblance to those Castlereagh had to face after what used to be called the Great War—the Napoleonic Wars. The same may be said of Mr. Temperley's chapter on Canning. These two chapters present a general picture of the policy of these two men, but thereafter the book does not give a similar picture of Palmerston's policy; in place of it comes a series of studies of the various questions that individually affected British foreign policy—such as Belgium, the Crimean War, the Franco-Italian War, the American Civil War, and so on, up to Palmerston's death in 1865. Most of these studies are by different writers, and this results in a certain discontinuity, but all of them are well worth reading.

New Fiction

By GERALD GOULD

The Friend. By Adelaide Phillpotts. Heinemann. 7s. 6d. net.

Jane—Our Stranger. By Mary Borden. Heinemann. 7s. 6d. net.

Jo Ellen. By Alexander Black. Heinemann. 7s. 6d. net.

IF only our young story-tellers could get it into their heads that it is their business to tell a story! Action, action, action! It is the sole requisite; it brings all the rest with it. It brings characterization, for the characterless cannot act. It brings dialogue, for speech is a form of action. It need not be noisy: the play of mind is the most active thing of all. But action there must be; and the new novelists will persist in abandoning it for thin and windy theory.

Let us moralize by all means, if we have anything to say and can induce anybody to listen. But do not then let us call ourselves novelists. Above all, if we really think that our vain repetition of general ideas is what the public needs or wants, let us imitate our betters, and put our digressions into separate patches, like Thackeray, or into separate chapters, like Fielding—not into the mouths of the helpless characters whom we have created. It is true that Thackeray lets Pendennis and Warrington, for example, argue at length about the duties of man as a social animal: but he gives Pendennis no single sentiment that is not dramatically illustrative of the nature, age, habits and outlook of Pendennis, nor Warrington a word that is not Warrington's. Action, action! Whereas now the printing-presses foam frightfully with the vague theories of intelligent youth, allocated for utterance to individuals without individuality, and couched in such language as never crossed the threshold of the human lips.

Whether 'The Friend' is to be regarded as promising or not depends on the age of the author; and yet as to that it would be impertinent to inquire. The book has much of the ingenuousness which distinguished 'The Young Visitors,' but the spelling is correct and the grammar, on the whole, excellent. The publisher says that the author has "a rare narrative talent." She certainly has a narrative talent, but I have been unable to discover any signs of its rarity. The plot reminds me of a rag-bag. The people are either the familiars of fiction or the fantasies of immaturity. Nevertheless, there is good stuff in 'The Friend.' It is about a woman who, I need not say, writes books (what in the world should we write books about, if not about people who write books about people who write books?). She is no longer very young, and she recognizes her own limitations. To her, enter a genius—a young girl with the odd but inadequate name of Agony, who writes a beautiful poetic play. The play is immediately accepted for production, as poetic plays by unknown youngsters always are. And the first woman, having yearned over the second in affection so long as she could do so from the position of mentor and superior, is made ill with jealousy when her pupil displays genius and attains success. It does not in the least matter that jealousy has been handled in fiction before. It is very much less hackneyed than the story of a young man's falling in love with a young woman, which remains the best plot in the world. What matters is that the jealousy is made to carry. It is new because it is real; and, in feeling it, a woman comes to life. But as for Miss Agony, the genius, she has, at great length, thoughts as original as this:

There are people who are poor—who are exploited; who never get a chance, and haven't the wits to make one; yet who live on — One could help them. . . . There are unjust laws—I must find out what they are.

Here, then, is a novel, neither better nor worse than many hundreds of others published every year, in which one prevailing malady of contemporary fiction can be very clearly discerned. I am not convinced that Miss Phillpotts could not write a sensible book: I am almost convinced that she could—if she were content to aim at being sensible.

An even more interesting case of the same malady is presented in Miss Borden's 'Jane—Our Stranger'; for this is a long, careful, well-written, profoundly-studied work by a mature and competent writer, which yet gives one precisely the same feeling of bewilderment and despair as 'The Friend,' by a similar mixture of platitudes and pretence.

The motive is poignant. It would have pleased Henry James. Jane is a child of nature, and of a scheming, climbing mamma; she is married off to a horrid but charming French aristocrat. Her story is told, for the first part, by the horrid aristocrat's crippled younger brother, and, for the second part, in the words which Jane is supposed to use in explaining herself to that same younger brother—though Miss Borden must surely be aware that no human being ever did, could, or would, use such words or anything like them. Now, the contrast is finely conceived: the large, plain, simple conventions of the American Middle West against the aggressively exquisite sensibilities of a narrow aristocracy. And Miss Borden can write. But she spoils everything by her ingenuous attempts to impress. I have called her aristocrat "horrid but charming"; that was in compliment to the author. She tells us he was charming; she has not the least idea of how to make him so. He is supposed to be the typical aristocrat; he is, in fact, merely a vulgar and empty-headed little bounder. His idea of being an "artist in life" is to build a very big house and fill it with exceedingly expensive things. Similarly, when Jane turns from his infidelities and brutalities to console herself with the intellectuals, Miss Borden breathlessly assures us how wonderfully intellectual they are. Their brains, their wit, their knowledge, their influence—here indeed we are to be at the core of life! And this is the way they actually talk:—

I sit in some old city of the past, and look back upon the present, and still further back into the future. Why not? Time is an endless circle, wheeling around one. Why trouble to imagine a beginning or an end? Why these unnatural conceptions? The old legends are more sensible. The ancient mystic symbol of matter, Ouroboros, the tail-devourer, a serpent coiled into a circle, symbol of evolution, of the evolution of matter. There is something there, something to think of. Let us all think of molecules, and remember the Philosopher's Stone. Have you ever laughed at the legend of the Philosopher's Stone that can transmute metals and give the elixir of life? What if it were discovered, this stone? Suppose radium were in the legend stone of long ago. . . .

And so on. We are back at the intellectual level of Miss Agony. And the curious thing is that 'Jane—Our Stranger,' is not, as a novel, intellectually contemptible. It sinks only by its effort to rise, by its straining after the sort of effect which is not germane to the story.

'Jo Ellen' might have been written to suggest the saddening truth that suffering does not always purify—that to be physically broken, thwarted, narrowed, does not necessarily mean to be spiritually healed and released—that sickness may serve merely to make more sordid the business of matrimonial disagreement and exasperation. But I feel sure it was not written to prove anything. It is a straightforward, shrewd, readable story. There is no pretence made about the people in it; they are even allowed to talk like human beings; but perhaps that is easier in American. I mention the book here for an object-lesson, a contrast, and an example. It is not a novel of heroic proportions. It is just workmanlike; but, for that quality, it is violently to be recommended in face of the great mass of unreal pretentious stuff (however unintentionally unreal, however unconsciously pretentious) which is to-day missing merit by attempting cleverness.

Round the Library Table

A MISCELLANY

I AM writing on the end of a table in a room whose walls are covered with empty shelves—bare empty boughs—where once my familiar books were round me ready to hand, and I have little hope of seeing them again for a month. Every few minutes an enquiry comes as to whether this or that is properly packed, so that it can be found at once in the new quarters; but books, alas, when you have any quantity of them, have a way of disappearing once they are taken off their shelves. The ordinary English householder is never troubled in this way. I have been into rather nice large houses in the country where there were not a dozen books beyond the three from Smith's or Mudie's. The bookseller who came to pack mine for me (I had told him that I had a good many) brought with him a dozen sacks, each of them to hold a hundred books, thinking that he would make sure; but it took him three days before his task was done. I tremble at the thought of the time that I shall have to spend in replacing them, a task no one else can do for me.

* * *

If, therefore, these notes seem more than usually desultory, a great deal may be pardoned to one who has for years been in the habit of writing in a well-stocked library, and is for the nonce thrown upon the resources of a treacherous memory. I have before me Mr. Chesterton's 'St. Francis of Assisi' (Hodder and Stoughton, 2s. 6d. net), interesting alike from the point of view of the author, and from the evidence it gives that the habit of making cheap plays on words has become fatally ingrained in his style. In the ordinary way I should now get up and look over the backs of the two rows of shelving which contained almost everything written on Francis and the Franciscans since M. Sabatier's famous life was first published, not to read them again, but simply to recall the various impressions left on me by them—their different viewpoints, historical, artistic, poetic, or devotional, coming back to his pages with a standard of comparison.

* * *

What I liked best in the book was his survey of the world into which St. Francis was born. Not that I should accept as an adequate explanation his description of the Dark Ages as a period of purgation from the "natural religion" of pagan antiquity, which was so foul as to necessitate a complete crushing of the whole of civilization to shapeless fragments before human ideas of nature could be purified. This is an attitude precisely similar to that of anarchists like Bakounin or Kropotkin, who spoke in the same way of modern society. And it overlooks entirely the moral side of the great struggle of the Church against lay investitures going on through the two centuries before St. Francis, in which religion was almost submerged before the triumphant atheism of the Western monarchs. But Mr. Chesterton makes his point in a fresh and vigorous way, and the whole chapter is one well worth thinking over.

* * *

Another book about which I am tempted to write at length is 'Medieval England,' a new edition of Dr. F. P. Barnard's 'Companion to English History,' edited by Dr. H. W. C. Davis (Clarendon Press, 21s. net). It is uniform with 'Shakespeare's England,' published some seven years ago, and is written on the same plan, which is also that of H. D. Traill's 'Social England,' with the first two volumes of which it can

be compared. It is the work of a score of specialists, and is divided into fourteen sections, with 359 illustrations. Let me preface my remarks by saying that two copies of the book have already been ordered on my personal recommendation, a result that does not always follow a favourable review of a serious book. It is, in my judgment, indispensable to everyone who has to do with teaching or trying to understand English mediæval history. Its writers are acknowledged masters in their several subjects, and the illustrations are well chosen and as new as may be.

* * *

If I had my books round me I should be tempted to differ from Mr. Falconer Madan about the date of the Book of Kells, which he puts in the seventh century. Mr. Madan is a doughty antagonist: he is probably the only man alive who could have got the Oxford Press to have passed the spelling "ceriph" for serif. I know he could point to the C volume of the Oxford Dictionary as his authority, but that is a long time ago, and the editors of the S volume repudiate it as antiquated. But most of the peculiarities of the Book of Kells are found in MSS. dated much later; the superior intricacy of its ornamentation to that of the Lindisfarne Gospels is at least as strong a presumption of later as of earlier date; and lastly, the figure-drawing of the Lindisfarne Gospels shows some observation of the model, the folds of the robes are those of a real material, while in the case of the Book of Kells the folds are the meaningless lines of an unintelligent copyist. This point, by the way, does not seem to be brought out in the British Museum Monograph on the Lindisfarne Gospels which is about to be published. But Mr. Madan's remark on this date is only an infinitesimal part of a new and valuable survey of the history of English handwriting, and this but a few pages in a book crammed with freshly-stated history.

* * *

I was asked the other day which English novels give the best idea of the life of the Russian educated middle class. I had said that I could not recommend Dostoevsky as a guide: he was a genius, and Russians who could understand all his assumptions and allow for his exceptional cases could appreciate him justly, but that his books were as much written for Russians as Kraft-Ebbing and Freud are written for Germans, and they had done equal harm to English writers. To my mind Walpole's 'The Secret City,' Gerhardt's 'Futility,' and the three girls in Mr. Edgar Jepson's amusing extravaganza 'A Prince in Petrograd' give the best picture of Russian ways of thinking and talking that I know of. It is late at this time of the day to praise 'Futility,' but the other two should not be overlooked.

* * *

A story is told by President Masaryk of Tourguenieff being asked to lunch with someone whose name escapes my memory. After an hour's talk Tourguenieff hinted something about lunch. "What," replied his host, "you want to eat before we have settled the question of the personal existence of the deity!" Russia is a great place for talking. When I was in Moscow last I went to lunch with Pierre Dalheim, the author of the only story about François Villon of any real value and a most brilliant journalist. We sat down at twelve and got up to part at two the next morning, and as we were exchanging adieus, the hostess said, "How pleasant it has been; all this good talk and not a word about God or the soul!"

LIBRARIAN

12 January 1924

Acrostics

PUBLISHERS' PRIZE

For the Acrostic Competition there is a weekly prize:—A Book (selected by the competitor) reviewed in that issue of the SATURDAY REVIEW in which the problem was set.

RULES.

1. The price of the book chosen must not exceed a guinea; it must be named by the solver when he sends his solution, and be published by a firm whose name is on the following list:

Allen and Unwin	Harrap	Mills and Boon
Bale, Sons & Danielsson	Heinemann	Murray
Basil Blackwell	Herbert Jenkins	Nash & Grayson
Burns, Oates & Washbourne	Hodder & Stoughton	Odham's Press
Chapman and Hall	Hodge	Putnam's
Collins	Hurart & Blackett	Routledge
Dent	Hutchinson	Sampson Low
Fisher Unwin	Jarrol	Selwyn Blount
Foulis	John Lane, The Bodley	S.P.C.K.
Grant Richards	Head	Stanley Paul
Gyldendal	Macmillan	Ward, Lock
	Melrose	Werner Laurie

2.—The coupon for the week must be enclosed.

3.—Envelopes must be marked "Competition," and addressed to the Acrostic Editor, SATURDAY REVIEW, 9, King Street, London, W.C. 2.

Competitors not complying with these Rules will be disqualified.

Awards of Prizes.—When solutions are of equal merit, the result will be decided by lot.

Under penalty of disqualification, competitors must intimate their choice of book when sending solutions, which must reach us not later than the Friday following publication.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 97.

SIX LIGHTS A POET, FOUR HIS BOOK DECLARE.

HE SANG OF KNIGHT, AND STURDY SQUIRE, AND BEAR.

1. One of a pair, it cowers within the nest.
2. Half of a charm retain, dismiss the rest.
3. A poor one 'tis, but, sir, my bat is broken!
4. Such phrases oft are by the unlettered spoken.
5. "Female apostle" was the school-boy's "howler."
6. In this may lurk a biter and a growler.
7. The plant will do, but it's an ell too long.
8. This my opinions are—not therefore wrong.
9. 'Tis not a dolphin—cut his tail off, do!
10. Used by the Picts to stain their bodies blue.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 95.

LIES HIDDEN IN THESE LIGHTS A TIMELY GREETING.

1. Who profits by it may escape a beating.
2. Curtail a beast from danger well protected.
3. Failure to solve it leaves one much dejected.
4. The fault is trifling—say no more about it!
5. What safety for old Priam's town without it?
6. Reverse a nag such as one finds in Shetland.
7. Makes of a dry, at times a very wet land.
8. Hard is man's lot when this is so precarious.
9. A deadly poison—spelt in ways most various.
10. Beer from the cow, like koumiss from the she-horse.
11. See him, in frail canoe, attack a sea-horse!
12. Three centuries ago I pulled a trigger.
13. To let his go good Job declined with vigour.

Solution of Acrostic No. 95.

A dmonishmen T
H edgeh Og
A cro-ti C
P eocadill O
P alladiu M
Y no P
N il E
E mploymen T
W oural I
Y aour T
E skim O
A rquebusie R
R ighteousnes S

- 1 Also written Curari, Curara, Urari, Woorara, and Woorali.
- 2 A fermented liquor or milk-beer, similar to koumiss, made by the Turks.
- 3 See Dr. Nansen's delightful 'Eskimo Life,' chap. IV.
- 4 Job xxvii. 6. "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go."

ACROSTIC No. 95.—The winner is Mrs. Fardell, 16, Brechin Place, S.W. 7, who has selected as her prize 'Brontë Moors and Villages,' by Elizabeth Southwart, published by John Lane, The Bodley Head, and reviewed in our columns on December 29 under the title 'The Brontë Country.' Fifteen other competitors chose this book, 42 named 'The History of Ireland,' 18 'The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall,' etc., etc.

Correct solutions were also received from N. O. Sellam, Old Mancunian, Boskerris, Lilian, A. M. W. Maxwell, Wang, Margaret, Pelican, Stucco, Mrs. D. Leete, Gay, Mrs. J. Butler, A. B. Miller, St. Ives, Dolmar, Stellenbosch, Zyk, M. Story, Spican, John Lennie, Baitho, Rev. J. A. Easton, Raga, Quis, R. H. Keate, Glamis, Brum, Met, Monks Hill, Doric, N. I. G., Shorne Hill, A. de V. Blathwayt, and Carlton.

ONE LIGHT WRONG:—Coque, Mrs. Edward Bensly, Lethendy, C. J. Warden, Still Waters, Plumbago, W. Sydney Price, Merton, E. Julia, L. Dury, Arthur Mills, R. J. M. W. Gunton, Varach, Igidie, C. R. Price, Phylax, B. Brewster, Puss, East Sheen, Portly, Oakapple, R. Talbot, K. Rhys Jones, Marnel, Vic, P. Cooper, Albert E. K. Wherry, Hanworth, A. S. MacNalty, C. H. Burton, J. Chambers, Nora H. Boothroyd, A. R. N. Cowper-Coles, A. W. Cooke, Miss Iris Tree, Trike, D. L., F. I. Morcom, Mrs. Oswald Haggie, Kirkton, and Buda.

TWO LIGHTS WRONG:—Madge, Iago, A. Riley, Gaunt, B. Alder, W. L. S., Bel'aqua, Tyro, Miss Green Price, W. G. Phillimore, Beehive, The Pelhams, Henry G. Gray, C. E. P., Tallow, Pen, H. Wolcott Warner, Maud Crowther, Aficionado, F. M. Petty, Mungo, and Tapeena. All others more.

ACROSTIC No. 90.—Mrs. Kelsall, one light wrong.

No. 93.—Correct: R. H. Keate. (Much regret omission.)

No. 94.—One Light wrong: Gay. Two Lights wrong: Gunton, Lilian, Mrs. Kelsall, F. M. Petty, F. I. Morcom, Margaret, and Vic.

OUR SIXTH QUARTERLY COMPETITION.—After the Seventh round the leaders are Baitho, Carlton, John Lennie, Martha, Merton, St. Ives, Varach, Mrs. J. Butler, A. de V. Blathwayt, Boskerris, Gunton, Gay, Lilian, Oakapple, and M. Story.

FOR READERS ABROAD

QUARTERLY DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 2.

Three months allowed for solving. A special prize—a book or books to the value of £1— is offered by the Acrostic Editor.

TWO TOWNS—TO ENGLAND'S GLOXY ONE GAVE BIRTH;

THE OTHER THRIVES BY DELVING IN THE EARTH.

1. Pale it will be, if off its head you take.
2. For speed, the record I shall never break.
3. Here we await inspection, foot and horse.
4. The wily pois'ner knows its deadly force.
5. A garment by the virile Roman worn,
6. Who often saw these by the lictors borne.
7. When sight grows dim, to me for aid you fly.
8. A feast where mirth and jollity run high.
9. Seldom has England hatched a nobler bird!
10. In this the pealing organ may be heard.
11. "Lost in a convent's solitary gloom."
12. By simple people sometimes called a room.
13. A whim, but in it Sinai lurks hid.
14. "Poor little chap," you cry, "poor little kid!"
15. She wept herself to stone, this lady did.

You
might as well
have the
best—



Blüthner

"The Stradivarius of Pianofortes"

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A few reconditioned used Pianos indistinguishable from new pianos are just now available at substantially lower prices. Deferred payments accepted.

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7-13 Wigmore St., London, W.1

—G.A.S.—

Stock Market Letter

Stock Exchange, Thursday Morning

THE Stock Exchange is looking to next week to provide the first Parliamentary shock of the new session. It is no exaggeration to say that thousands of inquiries are reaching Stock Exchange men every day from clients eager to know the House attitude. In reply, members point to the way in which prices are moving as affording the best index to the public view of the situation so far as can be seen at present. The War Loan, which, incidentally, came out about this time of year seven years ago at 95, has been down to 98½ during the last few days, while the Irish Free State Loan, ironically enough, stood at a shade above this figure. The palpable absurdity of this comparison brought in buyers of our own stock, and it would take comparatively little support for the quotation to reach the level three figures once more. It is the cheapest stock in the House, and travelling behind it at a very short distance is the Victory Loan. These bonds can be picked up in the neighbourhood of 90½, at which the yield on the money is 4½ per cent., without taking into account the prospect of their being paid off in any September at 100. Drawings take place once a year, and, with every drawing, the chances of redemption increase in mechanical ratio. It is estimated that the whole of the loan will be paid off in 38 years, but everyone who buys Victory Bonds nowadays does so in the hope that he or she will receive 100 in the following September. Moreover, Victory Bonds are accepted by the Inland Revenue at 100 per cent. in payment of Death duties, provided the bonds have been held in beneficial ownership for at least six months prior to the decease of the investor. This gives them an added claim to attention.

This week there has been noticeable inquiry for the War Loan 4 per Cent. Tax-compounded issue, on the assumption that there may be something in the rumour which credits (or debits) the Labour Party with the intention of putting up the Income-tax and dropping the Capital Levy proposal. All things considered, it must seem to the cool observer that markets have been holding up tolerably well, for it is unquestionable that the usual buyers of securities are not utilizing their money at present, but are waiting to see what is going to happen next week. The elements in the stock markets are not free from a real danger, and probably the Labour Party understands this as well as the business community. We have had both Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. J. H. Thomas speaking pacifically enough within the past few days, declaring that they echo the views of many of their colleagues in saying that the Labour Party, if returned to power, is not likely to do anything that would damage the credit of the nation or disturb the security of its stocks.

The real peril of the position lies in the possibility that, if there were to be any pronounced stream of selling on behalf of the public, unaccompanied by support from those who are habitual buyers of the stocks and shares that come to market, this might develop into something like a slump. We seem to have got past the days when prices go down with a crash or up with a run. Instead of the former happening, the practice nowadays is for a majority of selling orders, if on the large scale, to find itself met by dealers who will not make prices at all, with the consequence that sellers find themselves compelled to hold their stocks willy nilly, unless they can stumble across a buyer who is prepared to relieve them at the nominal market quotation.

This has the effect of arresting public apprehension, and although it is not consoling to those people who are prepared to sell at any price, it does, at the same time, go far in the direction of restraining any such sentiment of semi-panic as might be induced by a

wholesale marking-down of values. If the Labour party should come into power, and should start any freakish financial follies, we should in all probability see a state of affairs at which Stock Exchange markets will arrive at something like a deadlock. Of this eventuality there is but little fear, because the majority of people nowadays are far too commonsensible to fling away stocks which they know to be inherently sound, and the realization of which would simply add to a *débâcle* in which everyone would be caught and severely damaged.

Now that the Kaffir dividends are out, people are beginning to ask what yield is obtainable from good-class South African shares, and it will be useful to mention that Government Areas, the giants of this market, at the present price pay 10 per cent. on the money, the life of the mine being reckoned at about 25 years. The Crown Mines life is estimated at 35 years, and Crowns yield 13 per cent. Modder "B," which are 5s. shares, afford nearly 22 per cent., the life being calculated as roughly 20 years, and Modders pay 12 per cent.; the life is expected to work out to about 17 years. From these yields must be deducted about 3 or 4 per cent. if allowance is made, as should be done, for redemption at 5 per cent. compound interest.

It is, of course, extremely difficult to work out actuarially what the Kaffir companies' lives are likely to be, inasmuch as mechanical improvements are constantly being introduced that have the effect of bringing into profitable working fresh ground of lower-bearing stuff than is allowed for in the market estimates. On the other hand, the price of gold may go down; also, expenses may increase, so that gold-mining, even on the mathematical Witwatersrand, still offers all the attractions of speculation to those who like a dash of gambling in their high-yielding investments. This week's rises in the prices of some of the tin shares demonstrate conclusively enough that people are still willing to buy mining shares, the demand for tin descriptions coming to a great extent from the Middle East, Singapore being the principal centre from which such demand emanates.

Looking round in early January for children's investments, the benevolently minded (and harassed) income-tax payer is naturally drawn to British Government stocks. These must be inscribed with the names of an adult and child. The interest has to accumulate, and is used in the investment of further stock. It is not paid in cash, nor can the holding be dealt with until the child comes of age—save in the case of the child's death within the period. Registration of the minor's birth certificate with the bank is required. Accumulative dividend accounts can always be added to by the purchase of more stock, and the investment of any sum of money, down to one penny, is allowed.

The Stock Exchange has many societies and clubs formed from the ranks of its own members. There is the well-known Operatic and Dramatic Society; there are the orchestral and the choral societies; the boxing and the rifle clubs; athletic association (comprising half-a-dozen branches of sport), Christian Association, etc., but no literary society. What would certainly be very popular in the House if an energetic honorary secretary could be found to organise it, would be a Stock Exchange Acrostic Club. The Chess Club just manages to keep alive, but chess requires a local habitation as well as a name. An Acrostic Club in the House would be carried on within the House itself. There is an astonishingly large number of members who are wedded to acrostics, and those which appear in *THE SATURDAY REVIEW*, amongst other papers, have a wide circle of House solvers. One of the New Year activities may be, I venture to hint, the formation of an Acrostic Club, and, although the scheme is still in the air, it is quite likely to develop into something more concrete in the near future.

JANUS

Company Meeting.

BRITISH-AMERICAN TOBACCO CO.

The twenty-first annual general meeting of British-American Tobacco Company, Limited, was held on Thursday, January 10, at the offices of the company, Westminster House, 7, Millbank, S.W., Mr. A. G. Jeffress, one of the deputy-chairmen, presiding.

The Chairman said: Since our last annual meeting Mr. J. B. Duke, under whose able chairmanship the company so greatly prospered, decided to retire from active business, and therefore resigned his chairmanship and seat on the board. It is needless to say that the resignation was received with great regret. Sir Hugo Cunliffe-Owen, who has been a director since the incorporation of the company and a deputy-chairman since August, 1905, was elected to the vacant chairmanship, and the company and its directors are extremely fortunate in having in their chairman one who is exceptionally well qualified to be the head of such an organisation as yours. He not only commands the loyal co-operation of his colleagues on the board and every employee of the company, but his experience and knowledge is a very valuable asset to all our large and important companies, whose efficient management is an important factor in your company's prosperity. I should mention that the reason Sir Hugo is not in the chair to-day is that he is travelling in the Far East on the business of the company, accompanied by one of your deputy-chairmen, Mr. J. D. Gilliam. The directors have also received the resignation of Sir Arthur Churchman, Bart, M.P., from the board. Sir Arthur felt that owing to his Parliamentary duties he could not adequately attend to the affairs of your company. This vacancy has been filled by the election of Mr. Robert Campbell Harrison.

Taking the assets side of the balance-sheet first, the item of real estate and buildings at cost, less provision for amortization of leaseholds, £484,046, shows a decrease of £6,512 as compared with last year. Plant, machinery, furniture, and fittings at cost or under, £521,618, shows a decrease of £7,628. This is mainly accounted for by transfers to subsidiary companies. Goodwill, trade-marks and patents remain at the same figure as last year—viz., £200,000—and in view of the great value of the company's trade-marks the directors consider this item should remain on the balance-sheet, even if only at the nominal value of £200,000. A number of our associated companies have during the past year increased their indebtedness to us, and consequently loans to and current accounts with associated companies, £4,811,858, show an increase of £116,277. Investments in associated companies show an increase from £15,266,302 to £15,620,374. This is the largest item on the assets side, and shows an increase this year of £354,072. We have made investments during the past year by increasing our holdings in several associated companies.

Stocks of leaf, manufactured goods, and materials at cost or under now stands at £5,466,395, or an increase of £616,882, represented almost entirely by an increase in stocks of leaf tobacco. Sundry debtors, less provision for doubtful debts and debit balances, now stand at £1,094,710, a reduction of £564,779, represented largely by time loans to financial houses which matured during the year and which were not renewed.

Cash at bankers, in transit, and at call, £4,247,040, shows a decrease of £248,570. Our accounts are prepared to the end of September, and it is about that time we are in the midst of the leaf-buying season, and require large cash balances.

Turning to the liabilities side of the balance-sheet, the issued capital of 4,500,000 preference shares remains the same, but the issue of ordinary shares is increased from 16,046,070 to 16,071,327, an addition of 25,257 shares. This is due to 257 shares issued to shareholders in respect of belated acceptances of the issue of shares under the resolution of May 10, 1920, and to 25,000 shares issued to certain officials in pursuance of a resolution passed by the shareholders on January 11, 1922. Creditors and credit balances, £4,644,796, represents a decrease of £517,025 on the figure at which it stood last year. The item

of reserves for buildings, machinery, and materials remains at the same figure as last year, viz., £500,000, which your directors consider sufficient. Premium on ordinary shares issued has increased by £27,653 to £444,967, due to the premiums received on the 25,000 shares issued to the officials previously mentioned, and the sale of certain shares which were surrendered by one of the directors under the terms of the resolution of May 19, 1919, on that director's resignation. Provision for redemption of coupons now stands at £48,966, or an increase of £521. Special reserve has increased from £1,256,398 to £1,257,715, an increase of £1,317.

This brings me to the last item, viz., profit and loss account. The accounts show a net profit for the year, after deducting all charges and providing for income-tax and corporation tax, of £4,494,971, an increase of about £94,000 over the previous year, and in view of the continued business depression in the fields we cover, and the downward tendency of exchange for the year, the directors trust the shareholders will consider the results as very satisfactory. (Hear, hear.) Last year we carried forward a balance of £4,721,105, out of which we paid a final dividend of 9 per cent., amounting to £1,444,153, which left us with a disposable balance of £3,276,952. During the year some additional coupons have been deposited with us in respect of the shares issuable in pursuance of the extraordinary resolution of the shareholders of May 10, 1920, and we have allotted to shareholders 257 ordinary shares of £1 each and a sum of £257 is deducted from the balance, leaving £3,276,695. To this must be added the profits for the year as previously mentioned, £4,494,971, less the preference dividend amounting to £225,000 and the four interim dividends paid on the ordinary shares for the year amounting to £2,568,395, leaving a disposable balance of £4,978,271, out of which the directors recommend the distribution on January 17th instant of a final dividend (free of British income-tax) on the issued ordinary shares of 9 per cent., amounting to £1,446,425, leaving £3,531,845 to be carried forward, all of which is required in the operations of the company. This final dividend of 9 per cent. will make a total dividend of 25 per cent. free of British income-tax for the year upon the ordinary shares. The profit for the year now under review does not include any amount in respect of claim for refund of excess profits tax which was mentioned in your Chairman's speech last year, and which has not yet been adjusted.

I am glad to be able to report that in face of abnormal business and political conditions prevailing in many countries in which we operate, our total volume of business shows a substantial increase over the previous year, and this increase in volume has been maintained during the first three months of the current year. I should again remind you that your business consists entirely of export and foreign business, and this being the case the shareholders should bear in mind that the profits in sterling are largely dependent upon the rates of exchange, which were very much against us in the year under review as compared with the previous year, and I do not see any indication of a general improvement to-day. I now formally beg to move the adoption of the report and balance-sheet for the year ended September 30, 1923, including payment on January 17th instant of a final dividend of 9 per cent. upon the issued ordinary shares free of British income-tax. The directors have declared for the year 1923-24 an interim dividend of 4 per cent. free of British income-tax, also payable on January 17th, so that the shareholders will receive on that date 13 per cent.

I will now ask Mr. Gillchrist to second the resolution, and, when that has been done, if there are any questions to be put or comments to be made on the balance-sheet, it will be a convenient time to do so.

The resolution was agreed to, and the formal business transacted.

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